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JUST THE OTHER DAY

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THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT CABINET, AUGUST 1931

Back Row Sir Philip Cunliffe Lister, Mr. J. H. Thomas, Lord Reading, Mr. Neville Chamberlain, Sir Samuel Hoare
Front Row: Mr. Philip Snowden, Mr. Stanley Baldwin, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, Sir Herbert Samuel, Lord Sankey

JUST THE OTHER DAY

*An Informal History
of Great Britain Since the War*

by
JOHN COLLIER
and
IAIN LANG



HAMISH HAMILTON
90 GREAT RUSSELL ST. LONDON

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INTRODUCTION

IN this book we have attempted to treat the post-War years in England just as Mr. F. L. Allen has treated the post-War years in America, in his book *Only Yesterday*, from which even the title of this one is imitated. This book would not have existed if Mr. Allen had not conceived his brilliant idea, and no acknowledgments can be too filial or too hearty.

Once past the main idea, however, the reader will find some wide divergences between *Just the Other Day* and *Only Yesterday*. In some places they are as wide as the Atlantic. The skyscrapers and the Rockies of national achievements and absurdities are all on the other side of the water: we have had here nothing quite as fervid as the first Lindbergh sensation, and nothing quite as monstrous as the second one. This is not to say that we have found a lack of fuel for excitement or of food for thought: there is a plethora of both. The essential difference between, say, a survey of the Florida boom with its battalions of subsequent suicides, and a survey of our nearest equivalent, the Hatry crash, is that in the first case the thought follows the excitement, and in the second, the excitement follows the thought.

A further difference in method, or perhaps rather a development of this one, was thrust upon us by the fact that the English have not yet arrived at the American enthusiasm for tabulated records. The English Caliban takes no delight in seeing his face in a statistical glass.

Fortunately, facts have an existence independent of figures; and though we should have liked to have emulated our model in his stimulating electrical crackle of numbers, we have found that there are degrees in objectivity, and that by a meticulous care in juxtapositions, and by a meticulously observed detachment, it is not impossible to arrive at a truth as valid as that of figures themselves.

Two words in the foregoing, Caliban and detachment, have been used with much intention, and we should like to expand upon them. History deals with people and events that are prominent, and nothing is prominent that is not extreme. Moreover, the extremes of history do not balance to a true average, for in every group or individual the qualities that make for prominence are drawn more from one side of our nature than from another. Acquisitiveness, for example, has actuated countless outstanding acts; good temper is of its very nature incapable of actuating any. Yet good temper may play an infinitely larger and more important part in the hinterland of everyday life. Fortunately, this intrinsic shortcoming of history has its least effect when a period which is almost the present is under survey. Everyone knows—not certainly, but better than any book can tell them—what was the flavour of life during the last few years. That experience, the experience of the common level of happiness or unhappiness, must be kept in mind while reviewing the peaks of strength and folly that caused general sensation. It must be remembered that the peaks are more often absurd than inspiring. We can claim that our detachment in surveying them has been rigorous, both in selection and comment. The book has formed our opinions to a degree inexpressibly greater than that to which our opinions have formed the book.

In conclusion, we must express our gratitude to Mr.

INTRODUCTION

Frederick Brown, of the London School of Economics, for his invaluable assistance in dealing with the economic aspect; to Mr. James Cleugh, Mr. Gerald Griffin and Mr. John Heather for similarly essential aid on other parts of the book.

J. C.

I. L.

JUST THE OTHER DAY

CHAPTER I

AS YOU WERE

*When this bloody War is over
Oh, how happy we shall be!*

—Soldiers' Song.

Victory March—"The Hun Scuttling Gang"—The Man of Destiny—"Make Germany Pay"—Mr. Everyman looks at the World—General Dyer—Houseless Millions—Captains: Not Courageous—The Lowlands of Heaven—Psychic Cigars—The Old Land—War-Time Changes.

BLISS was it in that dawn to be alive . . . Or was it? Strange, and yet not wholly unaccountable that, in the dawn of Peace fourteen years ago, there should have been misgivings, sudden little lapses of hope rather than actual doubts, unspoken fear momentarily chilling unspeakable relief. It was not unaccountable because, after all, the weariness of four years of desperate effort could not be shaken off in a day—even in an Armistice Day. And, as somebody had said to the Prime Minister, "This victory is so vast that I can only take it in in parts"; which, Mr. Lloyd George thought, was "one of the truest things said about our triumph". People had expected the Peace to be all of a piece, and they did not quite know how to begin to fit the parts into a consistent pattern.

Still, there was no doubt that it *was* a vast victory, and although a chastened exultation was prescribed—"it is not

an hour for boasting, it is an hour for thanks", said the Prime Minister—London was granted one great day of pomp and circumstance. On July 19, 1919, approximately 18,000 troops, representing fourteen victorious nations, marched in triumph through London. Everywhere on the long route there were dense crowds, and so many thousands of fainting cases were attended to that the ambulance authorities gave up keeping count. Many of the onlookers were made aware for the first time that Chinese, Czecho-Slavs, Poles, Portuguese and Siamese were among our associates in victory, and that the Allied leaders included such persons as General Tang, Colonel Milossaviyevich and Captain Nitiakara. Near Albert Gate, where the crowd was thickest, young women ran into the roadway to throw roses in the path of Marshal Foch and Sir Douglas Haig. The King stood under the gilded roof of a white-pillared pavilion near the Victoria Memorial to take the salute of the troops, and Foch's dramatic flourishing of his Marshal's baton as he approached King George was particularly admired. In the afternoon there were dances in all the public parks, and the ten thousand voices of an "Imperial Choir of Peace and Thanksgiving", supported by the massed bands of the Brigade of Guards, were raised in Hyde Park. The night sky was the background for a firework display of eighty-four set pieces, including colossal "fire portraits" of the King, the Queen, and the Prince of Wales, and culminating with an enormous device—"Victory, Thanks To the Boys".

Yet even this fiery exaltation could not quite dispel the shadow of recent grievous disappointment. Rejoicing temperately over the surrender of the German High Seas Fleet, Mr. Lloyd George had said, "When you see thirty years of an arduous and dangerous conspiracy stealing into a British harbour to lower its flag to the British Fleet, it is something to be proud of." Indeed, the naval surrender was the most

spectacular satisfaction that victory had brought; seventy-four ships of war interned at Scapa Flow was, after all, something to show for our pains. But on June 21, 1919, exactly eight months after the surrender, pride and satisfaction were suddenly deflated.

At noon on that day the German ensign, which had been lowered once and for all (it was assumed), reappeared at the mastheads, and the battleships began to lurch and sway strangely. German sailors crowded into the ships' boats, but as the number of boats had been reduced owing to previous misbehaviour by German shoregoing parties, there was not enough room for all the men; some, wearing lifebelts, jumped straight from the ships' decks into the sea, where they were joined by comrades who had left the overcrowded boats. It was, on the whole, safer to be in the water, since certain of the British guard-ships opened fire on the boats.

Destroyers raced towards the rocking battleships, but it was too late. The Germans had scuttled their Fleet by opening the sea-cocks and knocking out rivets from watertight compartments, and within an hour the prize had vanished—five battle cruisers, ten out of eleven battleships, five out of eight light cruisers, and twenty-eight destroyers sank. Twenty other destroyers were run ashore. Only two destroyers and the cruiser *Emden* remained afloat. The aggregate tonnage of the scuttled battle cruisers and battleships alone was 400,000, and, in terms of cash, the loss was estimated at about seventy million pounds. Probably the most bewildered eye-witness was Mr. Bernard Gribble, the marine painter, who had been commissioned by the United States Government to paint a picture of the surrendered Fleet and was actually at work on the deck of a trawler when, one by one, his models disappeared.

The order for the scuttling had been given by the German commander, Admiral von Reuter, who insisted that

none of his officers or men should be considered as sharing his responsibility. He explained that he had followed instructions given by the Kaiser at the beginning of the War, that no German battleship was to be allowed to fall into enemy hands, and he denied that he had wittingly violated the Armistice, since he had not been informed of any extension of the Armistice beyond the date of its expiry on June 21. It should be added that there was no evidence of any hesitation among the German sailors to obey an order that exposed them to considerable risk—one estimate of the German casualties placed the figure as high as 200—and although the Red Flag was said to have been flown on some of the sinking ships, discipline was maintained to the end.

The sequel proved how far the British Navy has progressed from the time when, as Voltaire noted, it was the practice to shoot an Admiral occasionally in order to encourage the others. Nobody was shot, for no British officer could be held to blame. The conditions of internment had been fixed by the Inter-Allied Armistice Commission, and did not permit the British to place guards aboard the captive ships, the crews of which were in touch with Germany through a monthly supply ship. The Admiralty was able to prove that it had pressed strongly for the surrender, instead of internment, of the Fleet, and had been refused. And not even the most indignant leader-writer, not the most importunate questioner in Parliament proposed that those responsible for the refusal, the Inter-Allied Commission, should be court-martialled.

There remained the Germans—"the Hun scuttling gang". Newspapers pointed out that by violating the Armistice Admiral von Reuter had committed one of the gravest offences against military law, for which he was liable to the death penalty. On the day following the sinking he and some of his officers were taken aboard the *Revenge*, the flagship of the First Battle Squadron, to be rebuked by Vice-

Admiral Sir Sidney Fremantle. Von Reuter replied that in the circumstances every British sailor would have done the same. It was presumably thought inadvisable to give him opportunities of repeating this embarrassing defence, for although the First Lord of the Admiralty hinted at the possibility of a court-martial no trial was ever held. Von Reuter was sent to Park Hall internment camp at Oswestry, where, a week after the scuttling of the Fleet, he was attacked by a crowd and struck in the face with a rotten egg. With this expression of indignation and frustrated triumph the nation had to rest content.

All that, mortifying as it was, belonged to the past. Nineteen-nineteen was very consciously the threshold of an important and exciting future—"Reconstruction" was the password—and every moment of the present was impressively historic. When Mr. and Mrs. Everyman, as yet unaware that their *raison d'être* was the purchase of furniture by easy payments—when this rather irritatingly ingenuous couple looked about them they were overwhelmed by history. They saw it largely, in Emersonian form, as the lengthened shadow of a Man, and they would not have hesitated to name the Man. His shadow stretched half-way across the world—the Man who had won the War, the Man who, more than any other, it seemed, was making the Peace. His short, tweed-clad figure bustling up the gangway of the Channel steamer that is to carry him on his way to Versailles, to Spa, to Genoa, to San Remo, to Cannes—to one or other of a series of strange and fatal interviews—might, at the first glance, be that of a successful provincial stockbroker or company-promoting solicitor; there is the equipment of calculated energy, professional optimism, with just enough intimation of the man of substance—in the cigar, the general air of twinkling prosperity—to reassure the shareholders. And yet the wind-blown hair escaping from under the golfing cap gives a hint of an alternative

character. An influential Nonconformist preacher, perhaps; a brisk bourgeois prophet.

Thus the company prospectus offers the best of both worlds. The note is struck in Mr. Lloyd George's first great "Reconstruction" speech, a fortnight after the Armistice. First, the idealist's call to service—"Let us make victory the motive power to link the old land up in such measure that it will be nearer the sunshine than ever before, and that at any rate it will lift those who have been living in the dark places to a plateau where they will get the rays of the sun." And, almost in the next breath, "it is good business to see that the men, the women and the children of this country are brought up and sustained under conditions that will give strength and vigour to their frames, more penetration and endurance to their intelligence". It was in this speech that Mr. Lloyd George defined "our task"—"To make Britain a fit country for heroes to live in." The phrase has since become corroded with bitter and reproachful irony, but then 5,121,359 British voters had faith in Mr. Lloyd George's capacity to link the old land up, somehow, nearer the sunshine. The Coalition majority in the House of Commons was overwhelming; four hundred and seventy-eight strong, the Government and its "coupon" army faced an Opposition that was outnumbered by three to one, for the nominal Opposition total—two hundred and twenty-nine—included seventy-three members of the new and still obscure Irish group, Sinn Fein, who did not appear at Westminster.

Against the formidable Government majority must be set the fact that more than 4,600,000 votes were cast against Coalition candidates at the General Election of December, 1918, and it is possible, since the election was a stampede in the first hour of victory, to see a deeper significance in the four and a half millions who distrusted the War-winner than in the five millions who followed him.



THE HOUR OF LLOYD GEORGE

Edinburgh students 'ragging' after the election of Mr. Lloyd George as Lord Rector of the University, October 30, 1920

“MAKE GERMANY PAY”

We should find still more instruction in the figures, if it were not that the secrecy of the ballot makes it impossible to tell what proportion of the million soldier and sailor voters supported Mr. Lloyd George. In Parliament, however, the Government was for the time being invulnerable and irresistible, for its ranks were still solid and its opponents were from the beginning divided.

The programme was to “Make Germany Pay” and to “Hang the Kaiser”. It is true that Mr. Lloyd George (as he has recently been at pains to point out) pledged himself to exacting War damages from Germany only “up to the limit of her capacity to pay”, but the newspapers, supported by the highest authority in the City, cheerfully estimated the German capacity at figures that made the future seem bright to the British taxpayer. Lord Cunliffe, the Governor of the Bank of England, considered that Germany could pay £24,000,000,000. The Government’s own committee, under Mr. W. M. Hughes, recommended that the Central Powers should be required to make an annual payment of £1,200,000,000, which would bring in within a generation a total of £40,000,000,000. If the British Treasury experts would not commit themselves to any higher expectation than £2,000,000,000 as the full amount which it was possible for Germany to pay, unofficial financial opinion regarded this as merely the traditional timidity and myopia of bureaucracy. “As for collecting the bill without damaging our industries,” said the *Economist*, “this should not be a very difficult matter,” and “In normal times, when it is allowed to do business on business methods, Lombard Street has little difficulty in transferring any amount of money between nations that are in economic communication.”

Where the expert Press was confident it was not to be expected that the popular newspapers would be cautious. Mr. Hamilton Fyfe has said that Lord Northcliffe held as his private opinion that the policy of crushing Germany was

“idiotic”. But he allowed his newspapers to clamour for peace with a vengeance; for he had quarrelled with Mr. Lloyd George, and to demand impossible exactions from the enemy was a simple and effective way of embarrassing the Government; besides, he was a fatalist, and in spite of his public parade of power to mould opinion and direct history, he did not at heart believe that it mattered greatly what he or anyone else said or wrote—events would take their inevitable course. It can be assumed, however, that hundreds of thousands of newspaper readers were shrewder and longer-sighted than the bankers and the leader-writers, for Professor John Maynard Keynes’s treatise, *The Economic Consequences of the War*, outsold best-selling novels in England and America; and Professor Keynes declared that even the modest estimate of the Treasury experts—£2,000,000,000—would probably be beyond Germany’s capacity to pay, or ours to receive.

As for the hanging of the Kaiser, that was a much simpler commitment, because no one in authority supposed for a moment that Holland would deliver up the Imperial refugee for execution. In the meantime it did no harm for the newspapers to discuss at length the exact powers of the five judges who would try the Kaiser when he was brought to London—it was known that the prisoner, when he was handed over by the Dutch Government, would be lodged in the White Tower, at the Tower of London. But by the time the formal demand for the surrender of the criminal had been made to, and refused by, Holland, twelve months had passed since the General Election; none but the most credulous were surprised, and none but the sadistic were disappointed, that the White Tower was not to receive its prisoner nor Pierpoint, the executioner, his victim.

If Mr. and Mrs. Everyman looked beyond the frontiers of Europe, they were likely to be bewildered and repelled. America had not then expanded into the legendary glory of

post-War Prosperity, that fabulous dawn in the West which was to dazzle Europe for years until, at the height of admiration, it proved to be a sunset, after all. At the beginning of 1920 America meant, chiefly, the fantastic experiment of Prohibition, and "Pussyfoot" was the catch-word of the comic papers and music-halls: this word was made locally topical by the evangelizing visit of Mr. "Pussyfoot" Johnson, who was made to feel the full force of British resentment of alien conspiracy against our liberties; he was so severely handled in a London students' "rag" that he lost the sight of an eye. He accepted this mutilation with such good humour, however, that hooliganism was discouraged.

Though there were endless "Pussyfoot" jokes, there were none about bootlegging, rum-running, hootch or speak-easies, for America had barely had time to invent words to cope with the "Dry" situation, and it took a year or two for the new jargon to cross the Atlantic. Not until 1925 did the Chicago gangsters become familiar figures in the "splash pages" of London newspapers. Nobody in England had heard of Big Bill Thompson, Aimee Semple Macpherson, Lindbergh, or Sacco and Vanzetti; Dayton, Tennessee, had not been renamed Monkeyville, and Daytona, Florida, had not been named at all. Cinema enthusiasts were beginning to turn to a "suburb of Los Angeles", named Hollywood, as the centre of the world, but the name was unknown to the majority even of those who crowded to see Mary Pickford in "Daddy Longlegs", Lilian Gish in "Broken Blossoms", or the now forgotten triumphs of Nazimova, Pearl White and Theda Bara.

In one important direction Mr. Everyman was more completely Americanized than he is to-day; if he was among the relatively few motorists of 1919, his car was probably of American make; if it was a Ford it would almost certainly be unadapted for English road conditions, and Mr. Everyman would have the added excitement of steering from

the near side of the driving-seat. And, if the car was a Ford, he would be compelled, in self-defence, to collect current jests about "Tin Lizzie" in order to forestall the sarcasms of his friends; he would add knowingly that all the Ford jokes were invented, as propaganda, in the Ford factory. The more prosperous, or more snobbish, motorist might drive a Maxwell—which would cost him £500—or—if he had £1,350 to spend—an Apperson Eight seven-seater. If he drove an English car it was extremely unlikely to be a Morris, since Mr. W. R. Morris produced only 337 cars in 1919—six years later the number had risen to 48,000.

With cars and cinema stars, Ford and Pickford, filling the foreground of the American scene, it was not remarkable that, for the British public, an equally important figure was somewhat obscured. In December, 1918, President Wilson was cheered in the streets of London as no foreigner had ever been cheered, but, in spite of this first, fine, careless rapture in a time of flag-waving frenzy, his popularity in Britain was never wide nor deep. The Jingo—*at that time*, all but two newspapers and all the Coalition electors—did not forget that for half the War the United States had been "too proud to fight", and that Wilson was the author of the phrase, and they were shocked when, at Versailles, the President not only refused to plunder on behalf of his own country but obstructed the division of the spoils by less scrupulous associates. Nobody minded him being an idealist—we had an idealist leader of our own—until he had the bad taste to insist that idealism could, and should, be translated into action.

So, when the United States repudiated the League of Nations, its President's creation, and refused to ratify the Treaty of Versailles, the average Briton was surprised, rather pleased that a doctrinaire dictator had been put in his place by common-sense Congressmen, but not really perturbed. He could not be expected to see that, with America absent

from the Reparations Commission, the most urgent of the world's problems was delivered over to French control, and that Britain's export trade prospects—and therefore her main hopes of prosperity—were being inconceivably complicated by the votes of Middle Western politicians. And, as no Englishman has ever understood the difference between a Democrat and a Republican, he took the defeat of Wilson by Lodge as part of the general incomprehensibility of American politics.

The Western view was obscure, and the view from the opposite window was hardly more encouraging. Russia? It was comforting to have Mr. Lloyd George's assurance, based on "reliable information which we have received" in April, 1919, that Russia was not irretrievably lost to the exporter and investor. "Bolshevism itself is rapidly on the wane," said the Prime Minister. "It is breaking down before the relentless pressure of economic facts. You cannot carry on a great country upon rude and wild principles such as those which are inculcated by the Bolsheviks." He explained that it was impossible to make war upon these rude and wild economists; political morality and political expediency both forbade. "We cannot interfere, according to any canon of good government, to impose any form of government on another people, however bad we may consider their present form of government to be": besides, it would cost too much. Mr. Lloyd George also explained that it was impossible to make peace with the Bolsheviks, because we were committed to Admiral Koltchak and General Denikin. As there were at that time 18,400 British troops in North Russia, as well as naval and military forces in the Baltic and Caspian seas, and in the Caucasus, the second of Mr. Lloyd George's impossibilities was somewhat more evident than the first.

The information received by the newspapers was no less reliable than that supplied to Mr. Lloyd George. "Last

Hours of Bolshevik Rule" was a standing headline. On May 11, 1919, for example, it was anticipated that Koltchak would reach Moscow within three months; by May 25 the tempo of optimism had been accelerated, and the fall of Petrograd appeared to be "only a matter of hours". This was quite digestible fare for a populace that had lived on war propaganda for four years.

Still looking Eastward, there was India. During the War the Briton at home had been aware of India mainly as a recruiting ground, and official panegyrics of the loyalty of maharajas and sepoys had the solid backing of an Indian casualty list totalling 107,285. Nobody was prepared for the reports that suddenly came crowding after the Armistice of unrest, seditious speeches, rioting, sabotage, and atrocious murders of British officials. Then a hitherto inconspicuous officer, Brigadier-General Dyer, simplified the issues with soldierly directness.

The civil authorities in Amritsar, the capital of the Punjab, lost control of the city, and Dyer was sent, with a small contingent of British and Gurkha troops, to restore order. He marched through the city, with drums beating, and proclaimed all meetings unlawful. The same day he heard that a meeting was taking place in the Jallianwala garden, a tract of about three acres enclosed by a five-foot wall, in the centre of the city. There was only one break in the enclosing wall, a narrow passage through which Dyer marched his troops, so that when the soldiers had deployed in front of the opening there was no way of escape for the mob in the garden. For ten minutes Dyer's Gurkhas pumped bullets into the crowd; as 1,650 rounds were fired and there were at least 1,559 casualties (359 dead and 1,200 wounded), it will be seen that very few of the bullets missed a mark. Apart from the butchery by rifle-fire, there were, of course, casualties from the trampling panic of the trapped Indians, and it is said that thirty people jumped into a well in the far corner

of the garden and were drowned. The troops marched off, leaving the wounded to shift for themselves. There were no more disorders in Amritsar.

According to Mr. Edward Thompson, Dyer went to the Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar after the massacre, "all dazed and broken up, and said, 'I never knew that there was no way out.' He explained that when the crowd did not scatter but held its ground he thought it was massing to attack him, so kept on firing." But when he was called upon to justify himself before a Government of India inquiry some months later he had forgotten this. In the meantime he had learned that he was not a blunderer nor a butcher, but the saviour of India, and that his whiff of grapeshot had averted another Mutiny. He faced the Commission as a martyr to duty, a strong man who had deliberately done evil lest worse should befall. He was allowed his martyrdom, and was compulsorily retired from the Army; but sympathizers in all parts of the Empire subscribed £26,000 to gild the martyr's halo.

These alarms and excursions without might have seemed more portentous if people had had more time to think about them. As it was, disappointments and difficulties in foreign affairs were somewhat obscured by a host of smaller, more importunate, worries that came "home to men's business and bosoms". Domestic life was still embarrassed by the restrictions of War. Very slowly the larder was demobilized; margarine decontrolled in February, 1919; the abolition of meat, sugar and butter coupons in August; the increase of the sugar ration to half a pound a head per week—sweet deliverance! Not so sweet, however, if you had no larder to be demobilized, and to have a larder you must have a house.

In Greater London alone the shortage of houses was estimated at about 200,000. Dagenham and Becontree, dormitories of populations of London workers greater than

those of provincial cities, were not built. The northern suburbs, where "little palaces" jostle one another to-day, had to wait for years before Tube extensions made them accessible. Within a dozen years the London County Council was to spend £36,000,000 on providing dwellings for 236,000 people, and expenditure by private enterprise has probably reached double that figure. The measure of the effort is the measure of the need. Before the effort was begun the scramble for shelter was strenuous and bitter. Rent profiteers were the most bitterly detested people in the kingdom, and they earned their unpopularity. In advertisements of small London flats to let rents were usually quoted at between £250 and £350 a year, and there was in most cases the condition, "one year's rent as premium". "Slums", said Mr. Lloyd George, "are not fit homes for the men who have won this War or for their children. They are not fit nurseries for the children who are to make an Imperial race. Therefore the housing of the people must be a national concern." But even a post-War Rome could not be built in a day, and for long months and years the lack of fit nurseries for the children of an Imperial race was a major hardship of peace.

Mr. Lloyd George has said that the most fatal of all the legacies of the War was that it left the nations exhausted "in the nerve-power which enables men to decide promptly and to carry out decisions effectively". With all the expansiveness of the first phase of the Peace, all the vaulting ambitions that so soon o'erleaped themselves, there went a pathetic lack of confidence. The ex-Serviceman had for years had his life arranged from reveille to reveille, had been fed, clothed, and ordered to step off with the left foot. Now he was suddenly required to put his best foot forward, an indefinite and puzzling responsibility. He had lost the habit of responsibility, or perhaps he had never acquired it; for thousands left the Army as men who had entered it as

schoolboys. His predicament was to be without invisible means of support.

Make-believe was one defence against the terror of isolation. Although both the captains and the kings departed, the captains were as reluctant as the kings to relinquish their titles; ex-officers continued to wear their British warms, with the regimental badges stripped off, ostensibly as an economy but actually as a spiritual extravagance. There were ex-officer cabmen, ex-officer hall porters, ex-officer dance musicians, musical comedy choruses of majors—indeed, shortly after the War there were many more ex-officers than there had ever been officers, and a woman enjoyed the rank of colonel for seven years without exposure.

But the perpetuation of a prefix—a worn-out “captain” or “major”—was at best a poor prop for self-esteem. There was a demand for short cuts to self-sufficiency and mental athleticism; and those who supplied the demand were soon prosperous enough to be able to buy full pages of newspaper space to display testimonials from generals, authors, actresses and clergymen. One efficiency institute boasted that three million “little grey books” containing the secret of self-reliance had been sold.

The difficulties of this world increased the popularity of the next. At the Albert Hall the American Judge Rutherford told eager audiences that “Millions Now Living Will Never Die”, and in a Sunday newspaper the Rev. Vale Owen, a Lancashire clergyman, announced that millions of the dead were still alive “on the other side”. Since the Empire’s death-roll in the War was 946,203, necromancy has never had a more fertile field. “The other side”, it appeared from the spiritualist clergyman’s intimations of immortality, was given over to a kind of vaguely pious lotoseating in a land where it was always Pleasant Sunday Afternoon: hosts of Sabbath readers enjoyed his personally con-

ducted tours of a snug, suburban heaven, a high tea, Low Church paradise.

Mr. Vale Owen interrogated dwellers in the "lowlands of Heaven" by "thought questions": whatever was the parentage of the questions, wishes were clearly fathers to the "thought answers". The spirit asked to describe her home, promptly replied, "Earth made perfect." She added, "But of course what you call a fourth dimension does exist here, in a way, and that hinders us in describing it adequately."

"We have hills and rivers and beautiful forests, and houses, too," Mr. Vale Owen was told, "and all the work of those who have come before us to make ready. We are at present at work, in our turn, building and ordering for those who must still for a little while continue their battle on earth, and when they come they will find all things ready and the feast prepared."

"And houses, too"—it was a time when the shortage of houses was one of the chief hardships of the battle on earth. The spirit home was "beautifully appointed within and without. Within are baths and a music room and apparatus to aid us in registering our work."

There was no uncomfortable remoteness about Mr. Vale Owen's psychic correspondents. All his spirits were high spirits. "They are just as natural as we are. They are simply bubbling over with the joy of life: and humour is not absent from their composition." Humour, certainly, was not absent from their communications. The more exalted among them were addicted to spurious archaisms of speech, and "Arnel", a being of a high spiritual order, explains a difficulty in the identification of his kind with their former earthly selves: "Now, as to earth names. These are remembered for a time after transition by death: but new names are given here, and are used in constant. This has the effect of the earth name fading, becoming dim,

and at last almost, or quite, vanishing from the memory. Not so much while relatives are still on the earth, but after such time as they be all come over . . . Exceptions there are, but few."

But, of all these psychic testimonies, *Raymond*, by Sir Oliver Lodge, enjoyed the greatest prestige, and a revised edition was issued in the early days of the Peace. This reported how Sir Oliver's dead son, Raymond, lived in a house built of bricks in a world where the departed smoked cigars and called for whisky and soda. Both the cigars and the whisky were manufactured in laboratories, "out of essences and ether and gases". It was reported of one smoker of a synthetic cigar: "When he began to smoke it he didn't think so much of it."

An exquisite compromise. In the next world it would be easy to give up smoking, and yet not absolutely necessary to give it up if asceticism were too irksome—the ideal paradise for the average sensual Englishman, like all average sensual Englishmen a little ashamed of his senses. Sex was there, but in a perfectly nice way—"There are men here and there are women here . . . They seem to have the same feeling for each other, with a different expression of it"—and, if one got tired of being nice, there was always a chance of reverting to mere humanity by way of relaxation—"People are sent into the physical body to have children on the earth plane; they don't have them here." (Marlowe's Jew of Malta had anticipated this extenuation of the sin of fornication—"But that was in another country; and besides, the wench is dead.")

Heaven as a home from home has had an unfailing popularity. In 1925, long after Mr. Vale Owen had discontinued his personally conducted tours of the lowlands of Heaven in the *Weekly Dispatch*, the spirit of the former proprietor of that newspaper, Lord Northcliffe, told the woman who had been his secretary on the earth plane, "I

am wearing a grey suit (flannel) like those you often saw me wear, soft collar and soft shirt." There was a world of reassurance in that grey suit (flannel)—so much less embarrassing than the nightshirts popularly supposed to be the uniform obligatory for spirits. "One is never ill here, never hurt and never depressed. We have no money. We work things out in kind. I have worked for my suit. . . . I liked the pink flowers you brought to me, but don't bother to put any more on my grave. Graves, like the earthly body, do not matter. . . . The gravestone is, however, just what I liked. . . . I have a beautiful home, flowers and birds. I am so happy in my surroundings, as I was always a lover of nature. I even have conservatories for my flowers."

O death, where is thy sting?

The solicitude for national health that, while Northcliffe was alive, had been expressed by the Standard Bread campaign, took a more personal turn in his posthumous utterances. "Don't chew the end of your pencil when you write: juicy figs are much better," he advised Miss Owen. "I was with you on Saturday when you were eating one, and when you mentioned my name, saying how I liked them. I made you think it was not quite ripe, but only for the moment. I love to tease."

"Northcliffe's Message From Beyond The Grave" was given front-page publicity by the *People*, and was reprinted by newspapers from Sydney to Los Angeles. This was due to the enterprise of Mr. Hannen Swaffer, who said, "I was a newspaper man printing a sensational story. Yet I had handled it reverently."

Some antiseptic quality of *naïveté* redeemed the sky-probing of Mr. Vale Owen and Sir Oliver Lodge, but later necromancers were less disarming. The anguish of bereavement, the piteous rebellion against the finality of death, was slimed with vulgarity, callously exploited. One London newspaper offered "£500 for a Ghost" in a general

challenge to psychic practitioners, and the gage was taken up by a "masked mystery woman"; what promised to be a sporting encounter was robbed of some of its excitement when the medium decided that a public performance for a cash reward would be repugnant to her controlling spirits: eventually her séance was given without prejudice to the spirits' amateur status, but it was inconclusive, for the "expert committee" of judges, although agreeing that they had seen something rather odd, could not be sure that what they had seen was a ghost. If the old land of Mr. Lloyd George's rhapsody had not been brought appreciably nearer the sunshine by victory it seemed to be more generously flooded with moonshine than ever before.

Among others who found the moonshine very pleasantly deceptive, were those who dealt with the land in the most practical sense—the farmers. Just after the armistice, grain production, the foundation of English agriculture in the old style, was offering rosier prospects than any of its practitioners could remember. The labourer, who had earned about 12s. a week before the War, found his pay had risen to over 40s., while his hours, which had been elastic, and generally not far short of sixty a week, were fixed at forty-nine and a half, with overtime.

The law which fixed these wages fixed also a price for grain, which was sufficient to make them economically payable. The labourer bought a piano, the farmer bought hunters, golf clubs and a motor-car. He bought more than this. He bought every acre he could afford and every implement that came into the market. He was not to foresee that after 1921, when the farm labourers' wages reached their highest point at 46s., State assistance would stop short, though the State-fixed labourer's wage would remain the same for some time to come. During the next ten years wages were to fall by slow gradations to the neighbourhood of 30s. a week, but the unassisted price of wheat

followed a much sharper curve of decline, until in 1931 it was selling at well under £1 a quarter. Every thousand pounds which the farmers expended on the strength of the Corn Production Act had dwindled in value to about £250. Those owner-farmers whose reserves were insufficient to cover a depreciation of 75 per cent. were to be bankrupted, and the tenant farmers were often to escape only by reason of the few pence they could possibly pay per pound. But in 1919 and 1920 land prices soared, and God appeared to unite with Mr. Lloyd George in speeding the plough.

But for the fact that capital put into the land in 1920 could not be used again for the costly process of laying that same land down to grass in 1931, there would have been an even wider disparity between the aspect of England at the end of the decade and its aspect at the beginning. The old England of ploughed fields, poppied corn, the stooks and the stubbles, was enjoying the glow of its sunset. The next ten years were to see, not only the economic collapse of arable farming, but the break up of great estates under the strain of decreased rent rolls and heavy death duties; the influx of an urban population along the arterial roads and the new bus routes; the decline of sport as corn lands dwindled (with the contraction of corn production to 10·7 per cent. of the home agricultural market), and as machines and artificial manures rendered pheasant and partridge more costly to rear; the reduction of labour as more and more land was laid down to grass, and, with the increasing grass, a new landscape of fenced and evergreen fields, cluttered here and there with the raw shacks of the smallholder and the poultry farmer. In 1920 the spread of bungalows had not reached that extent which was to make the electric cable a paying proposition, by-roads were still innocent of tarmac; and if the farmer was replacing his gig with a Ford, and his cord breeches with plus fours, his men were still isolated in a ruralism which the

autobus, the movies and the radio were to demolish for ever.

The War, of itself, had changed little. It accelerated the tempo of changes that had been imperceptibly initiated decades—sometimes centuries—earlier, and only the break-neck acceleration made the difference between evolution and revolution. During the four years in which Britain's factories had been diverted from production to destruction the importing nations had learned to manufacture for themselves, and those who had been customers were competitors; but a hundred years ago a mere soldier, the Duke of Wellington, had foreseen this, without foreseeing a "world war". The invention of the spinning-jenny, that ruthless masculine invasion of one of the richest provinces of female labour, which made the spinning-wheel a museum piece, pre-determined the "modern girl" before the grandmothers of Waacs and munition-workers were born.

These and other foreshadowings of unfamiliar, exciting and uncomfortable phenomena were not obvious to a generation which was desperately aware of its unlikeness to previous generations, pathetically anxious to relate itself to the slow-moving, comprehensible life of pre-War. Man felt that he had lost his place in the historic procession and he was eagerly grateful to any guide who offered to help him to find it; so Mr. H. G. Wells's *Outline of History*, a "readable, explicit summary of the human adventure" that emphasized the continuity of the procession, was bought by more than two million people; and so, a little later, Mr. Galsworthy's sentimental slow-motion-picture of middle-class metamorphosis was accepted as a "saga".

The citizens of a brand-new world were ludicrously elated by any proof that it was really the same old world after all, by any return to the pre-War order—the first Epsom Derby, the first Boat Race, the first series of cricket Tests were reassuringly like old times. Even the æsthetic and intellectual innovators were austere conservative com-

pared with their early 1914 selves. Marinetti lay low, with none so poor to do him reverence, while Picasso was rehabilitating Raphael, and Mr. Eliot was insisting on the importance of Dante; Mr. Augustus John gave up *pastiches* of Van Gogh for *pastiches* of El Greco; the Sitwells formed the Magnasco Society, admired Baroque and revived the taste for wax flowers under glass domes. None of the new poets was as new-fangled as Browning had been, for their prosody, their diction and their rhetorical devices were derived from Frenchmen of the eighteen-eighties—Laforge, Rimbaud, Corbière, Mallarmé and Gustave Kahn; their “disillusion” was an echo.

Post-War pessimism was, indeed, remarkable for its vivacity. Young writers might believe that they had abandoned all beliefs, but they still felt that it was important to say so. Young painters might reject “human” emotions, but they still relied upon the absolute significance of formal design. In a sense the unintelligent were more advanced than the intelligent, for it took a year or two for the novelist to reach the stage, already reached by the dance-club morons in 1919, of accepting vulgarity as a criticism of life, of finding only inconsequence significant, the stage of “Eat, drink and be silly, for yesterday we died”.

This, then, was the company of which Mr. Lloyd George was chairman of directors—a going concern, the shareholders felt sure, although not at all sure where it was going. Its liabilities were unlimited, its capital was watered, but its goodwill was still valuable. “Any good business man,” said the chairman, “after carefully examining the ground, acts boldly, courageously and resolutely. He does not palter and tinker, but he makes a good job of it. That time has arrived for Britain.” “Boldness” set up the Coalition Government in 1918; and in four years a counter-cry for “Tranquillity” was to destroy it. And that was the first stage of transition from War to Post-War.

CHAPTER II

BRIGHTER LONDON

Brightness falls from the air . . .

—T. NASHE.

A Frontier Town—Beginnings of Brightness—Freedom Deferred—Enemies of Liberty—Entertaining the Foreigner—"Mr. A"—Madame Fahmy—The Dope Scare—From Billie Carleton to Brilliant Chang—Mrs. Meyrick and the "Forty-three"—Sergeant Goddard's Safe—The Dark Side of Brightness.

WHAT a brighter London might have meant, and what "Brighter London" came to mean, is one of the chastening contrasts of the post-War years. London had sunk during the War years into the garish provincialism of a frontier town; the Wild West shanties—wooden Y.M.C.A. huts in the Strand—the backwoodsmen—Australians and Americans on leave—lounging in Trafalgar Square, the troops of prostitutes, the general air of emergency, makeshift, impermanence, made "the flower of cities all" seem strangely like a gigantic Poker Flats. Mr. Richard Aldington's soldier, revisiting London in mid-War, was uneasily impressed by "the dimmed street-lights, the carefully blinded windows, the rather neglected streets, the comparative absence of traffic, the air of being closed down indefinitely. . . . It was as if a doom hung over the great city, as if it had passed its meridian of power and splendour, and was sinking back, back into the darkened past." Even when, after the Armistice, the blinds were drawn up, the lights switched on, and the traffic began to flow again, London was still

a poor relation of its pre-War self. The generalized aspiration towards a brighter London—up to the point of defining what sort of brightness was desired—was one which the intelligent and the irrational, the disinterested and the greedy, the pious and the pagan, the rich and the poor, could agree to support. Dullness is nobody's professed faith. "Brighter London" might have been a summons to build Jerusalem—or, better still, Athens—in England's green and pleasant land; but, as it turned out, Babylon was the model.

The phrase itself was a "slogan" invented to advertise the hotels, restaurants and teashops of an ambitious catering firm, but it had infinite possibilities of extension, and soon became the popular newspaper stunt of the day. The slogan was stretched to cover so many activities that those that were admirable and those that were questionable were carried along on the same wave. Thus, in the name of Brighter London, an evening paper raised funds to plant flowers along the Park Lane verge of Hyde Park—one of the few public enterprises to which no exception on any ground, moral, political, economic or æsthetic, could be made. When the lamp-posts in St. James's Street appeared in a new brilliance of aluminium paint—actually because there was no other use at the time for surplus War stores of aluminium paint—the newspapers applauded the co-operation of the Office of Works in the Brighter London movement. A few elderly clubmen were stirred to protest, in letters to *The Times*, that the change introduced a more garish London—but it was hardly to be expected that the Brightness demanded by writers of headlines and advertisements would be a Goethean "more light". Tulips and aluminium paint were all very well as the trimmings of propaganda, but the real interest lay in a *joie de vivre* that would consume goods and services, and pay dividends.

If there were people anxious to make money, there were millions anxious to spend it. The people had 'accepted, in the name of the Defence of the Realm, the restriction of personal liberty in almost every particular of daily action—in eating, in drinking, in travel, in the scope of employment and amusement—because they believed that the temporary sacrifice of freedom was the only way to preserve it in the long run. But victory came, and the reward of victory was withheld. Nearly three years after the Armistice there were only six and a half hours in the twenty-four during which the adult Londoner might exercise the choice between entering a public-house and staying outside, whereas little more than four years before the Armistice he was denied the right to choose during only four and a half hours in the twenty-four. Even those whose choice would normally have been to stay outside might well feel that the denial of the right to choose was an outrage upon reasonable individual autonomy. One or two glasses of beer the fewer mattered, perhaps, little enough, but one or two regulations the more mattered a great deal to anyone with a just regard for the value of responsibility. Attenuated though it undoubtedly was, the spirit of William John Ward was not extinct—that Ward who had written, a century earlier, "In Paris they have an admirable police force, but they pay dear for its advantages; I prefer to see, every three or four years, half a dozen people getting their throats cut in the Ratcliffe Highway, than to have to submit to domiciliary visits, to spying, and to all the machinations of Fouché." If we had become a little more sensitive about murders, and had become positively proud of the efficiency of our police—the dramatization of Scotland Yard, with its "Big Four", its limelit superintendents and inspectors, and its "flying squad", is essentially a post-War addition to public entertainment—if the spiritual descendants of Ward were

willing to admit some compromise, they still believed that it was better to risk giving the minority of scoundrels a little too much liberty than to take away liberty from all honest men. That was libertarian sentiment in its most disinterested expression. There were many people who had an interested objection to restrictions on liberty. They were frustrated consumers, or purveyors who were being deprived of the chance of making money.

Between 1914 and 1919 shopkeepers, proprietors of hotels and restaurants, and theatre managers had learned a new lesson in the profitable possibilities of innocents from abroad. A horde of strangers, soldiers from the Dominions and the United States, officers and men on leave passing through to their provincial homes, the camp followers of several armies, profiteers from all the neutral countries, a whole new population, mutable in its units but constant in numbers, had poured through the city like a river, leaving a golden silt. It was, in many respects, a demoralizing experience for those who had goods or services to sell. The customer who does not know very much about the alien currency he is spending or about ruling price-levels, and who, in any case, will not come back to complain if he is cheated, since he will be gone to-morrow, imposes an abnormal strain on trading morality; he makes exorbitant profits too easy. The traders' only grievance was that, because of Wartime restriction of production, they had not enough goods to sell, and this disadvantage operated throughout the first post-War boom—of which, in fact, it was largely the cause. By the time production had been restored to a peace footing the horde of tourist-consumers showed signs of diminishing. Brighter London was largely a bait to lure them back—most importantly a bait for Americans, for whom Prohibition had provided an acute stimulus to interest in foreign travel, but Americans escaping from Volstead

were not likely to be encouraged by Dora. So that there were powerful trading interests, not directly concerned with selling drink, that were anxious to restore pre-War freedom in drinking. They were the natural allies of the politically powerful brewers.

Nevertheless, freedom was deferred. Restriction had its own politically powerful supporters. There were the industrial magnates who were impressed by stories from America of the increased efficiency of workers under Prohibition. There were the battalions of voters arrayed under the banner of the Nonconformist Conscience. There were—most importantly—the bureaucrats. For two generations social legislation had been adding steadily to the authority of civil servants and local government officials, and the defence of the realm had suddenly brought them an accretion of power that, in the normal course, would not have come for two more generations; having gained power they were most unwilling to part with it. Bureaucrats—the permanent officials of the great departments—form the effective Government of the country, unshaken by the changing fortunes of the polls and impervious to unpopularity, and their power is exercised through regulations and restrictions: so that their natural inclination to preserve as many regulations and restrictions as possible was the most formidable obstacle that any movement for emancipation had to overcome. The pre-War symbol of repression was Mrs. Grundy; the post-War symbol is Dora, who is Mrs. Grundy in uniform.

Some compromise had to be made, and it was made slowly and grudgingly. It was not until August, 1921, nearly three years after the Armistice, that the Licensing Bill, extending "permitted hours" from six and a half to eight, received the Royal Assent. It was unfortunate that the issue of personal liberty should have been concentrated, as it was in the public mind, on this question of

"Time, gentlemen, please!" There were a dozen equally vital ways in which individual freedom and responsibility were being undermined, but as nobody's pocket was affected, it was worth nobody's while to make a fuss. It was unfortunate because it tempered the libertarian enthusiasm of many intelligent people, who were inclined to suspect any organized attack on Dora as a disguised movement to increase brewery dividends. It was unfortunate because it conferred a false prestige on defiance of the licensing laws and gave night club sharks a spurious justification. It reproduced, on a smaller scale, the conditions that in America have made the bootlegger a benefactor and have turned freedom into a racket.

In the autumn of 1921, when the Licensing Bill became the Licensing Act, this disadvantage was not obtrusive. The liberated—though very slightly liberated—consumer was inordinately grateful, though there should have been no call upon gratitude for a very incomplete return of stolen property. And the vested interests set themselves to make the most of the niggardly concession. There was a sudden pullulation of night clubs, cabarets, "midnight follies"—the popular song of the moment was "Ain't We Got Fun?" London, said the newspapers—prompted by their advertisers—was about to become the playground of the world. How strange and sad that what we now remember of the Brighter London phase are its brutalities and vulgarities, its blatant or furtive rogueries!

The scramble for tourists' money degraded whole areas of London. Reputable shops, forgetting the generations of stubborn chastity and proud modesty that had brought them repute, turned to harlotry, shamelessly importuning the passer-by. The passer-by dominated Bond Street and Regent Street in the summer, and the dweller in London was an interloper in Brighter London. The city shed part of its dignity and at least half of its charm in its vulgar

anxiety to profit by the entertainment of the wealthy visitor from abroad.

The entertainment of one wealthy visitor from abroad furnished matter for much legal argument and popular discussion at the end of 1924. Some years earlier Sir Hari Singh, K.C.I.E., K.C.V.O., nephew and heir presumptive of the Maharaja of Kashmir, had come westward to complete his Indian education by contact with European culture; that is to say, he amused himself in much the same way as the wealthy young Englishman visiting India amuses himself: he played polo, gave dinner-parties in the most expensive hotels available, went to races and dances. One night, at a Victory Ball at the Albert Hall, he sat in the next box to a Mrs. Charles Robinson, the wife of a bookmaker; and the foundations of the "Mr. A" case were laid. By a coincidence which, on consideration, does not seem very remarkable—the area of fashionable London is small—Mrs. Robinson was walking a few days later outside the hotel where the prince was staying and met a member of his suite. Within a week or two Mrs. Robinson had become Sir Hari Singh's mistress, and, according to evidence given by Mrs. Robinson when the matter came before the High Court, it was arranged that when the prince returned to India she should go with him. This journey ended abruptly in Paris, for on the first night they spent together at the St. James and Albany Hotel there was an incident which, in its details, has remained the subject of controversy. What was never disputed was that in the early hours of the morning a man named Montague Noel Newton walked unannounced into their bedroom.

Four years later Mr. Charles Robinson brought a suit against the Midland Bank to recover £125,000, the balance of the proceeds of a cheque for £150,000 drawn by Sir Hari Singh in favour of "C. Robinson". It appeared

that the prince had been so disturbed by Mr. Newton's intrusion upon his privacy in Paris, and so unwilling to face the possibility of his sentimental entanglements being publicly discussed in the Divorce Court, that he had written two cheques, each for £150,000, to make good the damage to Mrs. Robinson's chastity and Mr. Robinson's feelings. Neither cheque ever reached the Robinsons. One was cashed by Mr. Montague Newton and a friend, a solicitor's clerk named William Cooper Hobbs, who handed £25,000 to Mr. Robinson, who remained for two or more years under the impression that this was Sir Hari Singh's full settlement. The £125,000 balance was shared by Mr. Newton, Mr. Hobbs, and an Irish member of Sir Hari Singh's suite. Mr. Robinson's contention was that it was due to the negligence of the bank that the money got into the hands of Newton and Hobbs instead of being paid out to him. The second cheque was stopped by Sir Hari Singh after he had, rather belatedly, consulted a solicitor; but Mr. Robinson was too forbearing to sue the prince for the second £150,000.

In the trial before Lord Darling both sides agreed that there had been a conspiracy, but could not agree as to the number of the conspirators. According to Mr. Robinson there were three—Mr. Newton, Mr. Hobbs and the Irish aide-de-camp. The bank accepted those three and added three more—Mr. and Mrs. Robinson and a woman friend of Mrs. Robinson's who had had a liaison with an Indian member of Sir Hari Singh's suite. There was a superfluity of "sensation", for either story—the plaintiff's or the defendants'—would have furnished the newspapers with all the startling headlines they could carry, and overwhelmed sub-editors had to pass over in unemphatic type incidents which, in the ordinary way, would have furnished matter for a *cause célèbre*. The first note of excitement was struck within a few minutes of

Lord Halsbury opening the case for Mr. Robinson, when he intimated that the name of the Eastern potentate round whom the case revolved would not be disclosed, and for the next few weeks the public were left to guess at the identity of "Mr. A". This alphabetical stratagem was adopted on the advice of the India Office, which was anxious to spare the feelings of the heir to an important *gadi*, and which overlooked the fact that so long as "Mr. A's" identity was indefinite every Indian potentate was under suspicion; so that before the case was half over the dignity of a score of important Indian rulers was wounded and in the end the name of Sir Hari Singh had to be officially disclosed. During the nine days' hearing in the Law Courts, however, the absentee hero of the drama was, theoretically, anonymous—only theoretically, because a barrister, in the heat of cross-examination, let the name slip out, and, although British newspapers kept the secret, the French Press, being in no danger of a charge of contempt of court, displayed Sir Hari Singh's name and photograph on their front pages.

The story told by Mr. and Mrs. Robinson, which was accepted by the jury, was that Newton became aware of the prince's liaison with Mrs. Robinson and conspired with the aide-de-camp to persuade the prince that Mrs. Robinson's husband had also become aware of it and intended to take proceedings for divorce, and that by this means Sir Hari Singh was persuaded to purchase immunity for £300,000. It was also alleged that Newton incited Robinson to threaten divorce proceedings, and then persuaded him to withdraw in consideration of a payment of £25,000. The opposing story put forward by the defence was that the Robinsons were from the beginning concerned with Newton, the aide-de-camp and Hobbs in the plot against the prince, that Mrs. Robinson suggested that Newton should pose as her husband because Mr. Robinson

looked "too much like a butcher", and it was in that capacity that Newton entered the bedroom of the Paris hotel, after Mrs. Robinson had unlocked the door for him. The obvious difficulty was that the evidence of "Mr. A" was not available to either side; and it seemed unlikely that Newton would come into court to incriminate himself by giving evidence for the defence. But Newton did give evidence for the defence—after the Midland Bank had paid him £3,000 in consideration of the risk and inconvenience of leaving his home in Paris to put himself within reach of the Metropolitan police; and his appearance provided one of the most unusual episodes in the history of the King's Bench Division.

His examination by the leading counsel for the bank, Sir John Simon, provided a flamboyant contrast between that pattern of legal rectitude, the son of a Nonconformist minister, and a witness who admitted, without hesitation, that he had engaged in blackmail on a £300,000 scale. His quarrel could not, by any stretch of charity, have been called just, but he was thrice armed—with imperturbability, effrontery, and wit. It was an armament that presented overwhelming difficulties to cross-examination; he told Lord Halsbury that he was heartily ashamed of his part in the conspiracy, to add that shame had overcome him only "at the possibility of exposure": he professed to have been pained by the discovery that one of his fellow-conspirators was "not quite truthful", and he complained that the Irish aide-de-camp had, by bringing a lawsuit against him, tried to blackmail him. He admitted that he had not been satisfied with his share of the booty from Sir Hari Singh's first £150,000 cheque, and had made a voyage to India in the hope of squeezing out the second £150,000 from the cheque which had been stopped. He gave, in sardonic detail, his version of his visit to the hotel bedroom, declaring that Mrs. Robinson had saluted him,

with sundry blows and scratches, as "my brute of a husband", and how Sir Hari Singh—"if a gentleman of his colour could be said to do so"—had "turned green". For days Mr. Montague Noel Newton was without a competitor in public attention; if the bank's £3,000 had been spent, disinterestedly, in the cause of national entertainment it would not have been a penny too much. Only in one direction did he fall short; the jury listened to his story in the spirit in which a Cambridge psychologist reads poetry, rigorously distinguishing between its amusement-value—its worth as "pseudo-statement"—and its factual validity; for they found that, although there had been a conspiracy against "Mr. A", Mr. and Mrs. Robinson were not parties to it. They also found that the £150,000 had been paid by "Mr. A" under the influence of fear, that it had therefore been obtained illegally, and that Mr. Robinson was not entitled to recover any part of the proceeds of an illegal extortion by others.

That was not the end of the "Mr. A" case. During the hearing Mr. William Cooper Hobbs, the elderly bearded solicitor's clerk who had been named by Newton as one of the conspirators, had been taken severely to task by the judge for his delay in producing relevant documents, and he had contributed to the general excitement of the trial by expressing the view that certain persons who laughed at his answers to Lord Darling were "baboons". When the trial ended Mr. Hobbs walked out into a corridor where he met a friend, who happened to resemble him closely, and had the quaint fancy of exchanging hats and overcoats with this acquaintance. The friend walked out into the Strand, closely attended by detectives, so that when Mr. Hobbs left the building some time later he was not embarrassed by the inquisitiveness of comparative strangers. This happy immunity, however, lasted only a few hours; the same night, at the port of Gravesend, he

was arrested. At the Old Bailey a month or two later he was found guilty of conspiring to obtain money from Sir Hari Singh, and received the maximum sentence, two years' hard labour. Newton, who was the principal witness against Hobbs, was not prosecuted. There remained, of those who were alleged to have taken part in the conspiracy, the Irish aide-de-camp; he was arrested in Paris; he emphatically denied the charge of conspiracy; and proceedings for his extradition were unsuccessful.

"Mr. A"—who shortly afterwards became the ruler of Kashmir—was not the only rich and unwise man from the East to loom portentously against the gaudy background of Brighter London. One strange night in 1923, during the wildest thunderstorm that London could remember, when "the sky was illuminated by brilliant, continuous flashes, and at least once what seemed to be a gigantic fire-ball broke into a million fragments of dazzling fiery sparks", a night for melodrama, Prince Aly Fahmy Bey, a young Egyptian millionaire, was shot dead by his French wife in their suite at the Savoy Hotel. The arrest of Madame Fahmy on a charge of murder, and her trial at the Old Bailey, supplied column upon column of highly spiced newspaper-reading, for the prisoner was a good-looking and sympathetic young woman and the prince had been a monster of cruelty and degeneracy; and as Sir Edward Marshall Hall was the defending counsel the trial was a banquet of emotionalism and raw sensation. There was no doubt that Madame Fahmy had gone in fear of her life: on the day before the shooting the leader of the hotel orchestra had asked her if there was anything she would like to be played, and she had replied, "My husband is going to kill me in twenty-four hours, and I am not very anxious for music." Even if there had not been ample support for her story that she took up the pistol in self-defence and fired it by accident, it would have been

difficult for the jury to overcome their pity for a white victim of Eastern vice. Marshall Hall stressed the racial contrast to the point of absurdity. Even the sun was made race-conscious in his final appeal to the jury—"I want you to open the gates where this Western woman can go out, not into the dark night of the desert, but back to her friends. . . . You will open the gate and let this woman go back into the light of God's great Western sun." Madame Fahmy got the acquittal she deserved, but, as in the case of "Mr. A", many pin-pricks had been inflicted on Eastern sensitiveness. In the Robinson action an Indian nobleman was referred to as a "nigger", and in the Fahmy trial Marshall Hall spoke of Prince Aly crouching "like an animal, like an Oriental". The Bâtonnier of the Egyptian Bar cabled to the Attorney-General protesting against Marshall Hall's licence "in allowing himself to generalize, and to lash all Egypt, and indeed the whole East. . . . It is unjust and disloyal to judge a whole nation by the conduct of a single individual."

There was one sinister direction in which the baser side of the "good-time" craving had been fixed long before Brighter London became self-conscious. After the first Victory Ball at the Albert Hall in November, 1919, a popular actress, Billie Carleton, was found dead in her flat. She had taken an overdose of cocaine. It was the first intimation to the suburbs—although no news to denizens of the Wartime Piccadilly-Alsatia—that cocaine had become an indispensable stimulant of gaiety for hundreds of the professionally gay. The vice, which was said to have been popularized in the half-world by American and Canadian soldiers, was making fortunes for unscrupulous chemists and other traffickers. The "dope" scare began. It was to provide startling headlines for three or four years. The evidence at the inquest on Billie Carleton

told a sordid and pathetic story of the dead girl's exploitation by a crew of pleasure-parasites, and the coroner's jury returned a verdict of manslaughter against Reginald de Veulle, described as a dress-designer, who was alleged to have supplied Billie Carleton with cocaine. The fellow was committed on the coroner's warrant; it was impossible to establish the charge of manslaughter, but his acquittal on this count was followed by a sentence of eight months' imprisonment for conspiring to procure cocaine. It was clear, however, that far more intelligent and dangerous conspirators remained to be dealt with—if they could be caught.

An account of the campaign against the dope traffic must—because of the peculiarities of the law of libel—leave out the battle of Waterloo. The most ambitious and successful organizers of cocaine distribution in London, and the only men who approximated to sensational stories of "dope kings" were indeed sent to prison, but they were convicted of offences unrelated to the sale of drugs, and so they cannot be named in connexion with the cocaine trade. But there were almost daily arrests of drug peddlers to keep the "dope menace" in the news, and from time to time a more impressive catch—such as Iassonides, the Soho restaurant-keeper, and the negro, Edgar Manning—would be landed. The wretched business smouldered for three years after Billie Carleton's death, and then flared up again when a dancing teacher—so the coroner's record described her—named Freda Kempton died of an overdose of dope. In its main outline her history duplicated that of Billie Carleton, and it introduced a conventionally sinister figure in the Chinese, Brilliant Chang, whom the girl had visited at three o'clock on the morning before her death. Although there was little doubt that it was he who had supplied her with the three bottles of cocaine that were found in her possession, there was no definite proof. Chang was the proprietor

of a Regent Street restaurant. He had come to this country as the agent of a firm of naval contractors on the China station, and at one time had been wealthy, but he had squandered £25,000 within a few years. His fur-coated, silk-shirted extravagance of costume, the suavity of his manner, and the bland cunning which protected him from the inquisitiveness of the coroner and the police, all fulfilled the popular conception of Oriental villainy. There was not enough evidence against him in the case of Freda Kempton for the police to take action, and when the inquest was over he disappeared into the obscurity of Limehouse. Four times the police caught Chinese drug-sellers whom they knew to be Chang's employees, but it was two years before they were able to trap Chang himself. He was consistent in his character of cinema villain. A letter, intended for a prospective victim, which was produced at his trial, showed his method of approach.

"Dear Unknown," it read, "I am unable to resist the temptation after having seen you very many times. I should like to know you better, and shall be glad if you will do me the honour of meeting me one evening and we can go out to dinner and have a quiet chat—yours hopefully, CHANG."

It appeared that a great many dear unknowns had been unable to resist the temptation of better acquaintance with the hopeful Chinese.

With the conviction and deportation of Chang the last spectacular figure of the dope melodrama disappeared. Cocaine had never been more than a very limited social menace. It enabled prostitutes and a few other hard-driven public entertainers to meet the grim necessity of being gay. It is unlikely that it corrupted many who were not already committed to corruption—at the worst it merely accelerated the destructive process. Undoubtedly

any commerce that provides so easy a living for so degraded and callous a gang as the Mannings and the Changs, is an evil; these parasites did not even recognize honour among outcasts, and cheated their customers with adulterated dope at extortionate prices. The main importance of cocaine in the social history of the early 'twenties lies in the hysterical attention paid to it by the Press, and for that reason it cannot be left out of account in a description of Brighter London. It was a key-word, like "jazz", "cocktail", "graft" and "night club". It was the night club, however, that gave the darker side of Brighter London its representative figure, its expressive personality.

One early morning a detachment of police from Vine Street station forced their way into a building in Gerrard Street, Soho, and took the names of a number of men and women whom they found drinking and dancing in two rooms there; the "Forty-three" had been raided for the first time. When the proprietress of the night club appeared at the police court a few days later there was no indication that an important and picturesque law-breaker had entered the scene. Rather it seemed that Mrs. Kate Meyrick, the widow of an Irish doctor, had been ill-advised in the enterprise she had chosen to support her large family, and had blundered through inexperience into infringements of the licensing laws; even the fact that she had been associated during the War with an unsavoury night club which had been raided and closed was hardly felt to count against her. She had, perhaps, been exploited—a comparatively small fine, £25, was imposed to deter her from further adventures in a sphere unsuited to the widows of doctors. Ten years later Mrs. Meyrick was to boast, or admit, that she had paid out £3,000 in fines, for herself and her employees; and by that time she had served several prison sentences for her persistence in selling drinks at forbidden hours. Nothing that authority

could do could suppress her; the "Forty-three" was disqualified by magistrates from being used as a club, but it was immediately re-opened as an unregistered club; the heaviest permissible fines were incommensurate with the profits; and when Mrs. Meyrick was in gaol there were others to carry on the tradition.

The "Forty-three" became the most notorious night club in the world. Exiles in the tropics gossiped over *chota pegs* of that focal point of "good times" on Home leave—those reminiscences, those "good times", both pathetically eloquent of the lowering effects of tropical exile. Suburban youth aspiring to important metropolitan viciousness, Northern manufacturers affirming that it is not what Lancashire thinks, but what Lancashire drinks, to-day that gives her priority over the softer South, undergraduates thrilled by the proximity of vice and the remoteness of the Vice-Chancellor, Rugby players celebrating victory, or forgetting defeat, journalists, bookmakers, actors, boxers, the heirs of Corinthian Tom and Jerry—these were the raw material of night-club prosperity. Raw, but still capable of being fleeced, and naturally there was no lack of shearers. And, apart from Mrs. Meyrick's interest as a fixed mark in the shifting and shiftily landscape of the underworld, she deserves particular attention because of her candour in discussing, in various newspaper interviews, one of the most obscure branches of economics—the profits and losses of coney-catching. She has claimed, for example, that during ten years of night-club operation, half a million pounds passed through her hands. At the height of her activity she paid £3,700 a year in rent for her clubs—for the "Forty-three" was only the most notorious and enduring of several—and one week's profit at one club from the sale of drinks alone was £250. A bottle of beer, which cost her $4\frac{1}{2}d.$, cost the illicit consumer one shilling and sixpence: "champagne", she said, "on an average,

cost me 12s. 6d. a bottle. I sold it during licensed hours for 22s. 6d. to 30s., and after legal hours at 30s. to £2 a bottle." Altogether she estimated that she sold fifty thousand pounds worth of champagne. "Door money", the preliminary tribute required of those who wished to contribute to three hundred per cent. profits on early morning drinks, brought in ten thousand pounds. It is not remarkable, with these figures in view, that at the Silver Slipper club Mrs. Meyrick was able to count on a clear weekly profit of five hundred pounds. And her prosperity was shared by humbler ministers to the Brightness of London; her waiters received wages of five shillings a week, but they drove home at dawn in their own motor cars; the women she employed to entertain the undergraduates and textile magnates were paid three pounds, and acquired fifty or sixty pounds, a week. So long as Mr. Gandhi, six thousand miles away, remained quiescent, and Lancashire piece-goods maintained their market, the "Forty-three" could rely on its textile magnates to make up for the limited resources of the undergraduates—as on a night in 1927 when a mill-owner spent £200 in a couple of hours. Compared with this munificence, the privilege of entertaining members of the peerage was a sentimental satisfaction; dukes, said Mrs. Meyrick, seldom spent more than three pounds in a night. This, however, did not operate to the prejudice of the nobility, for one of Mrs. Meyrick's daughters married an earl and another a baron.

One heavy expense of night-club promotion, according to Mrs. Meyrick's account, came under the ambiguous heading of "protection". At the height of her activities, she has said, she paid at least £130 a week to ensure that those activities should not be too seriously questioned. To whom? The question, unanswered by Mrs. Meyrick, was answered—in part, at least—by the evidence in the prosecution of Sergeant Goddard.

In October, 1928, the newspapers announced that Scotland Yard was taking energetic action to investigate rumours of corruption in the Metropolitan Police, and on that day Station-Sergeant George Goddard, of Vine Street, visited a deposit in Oxford Street at which he rented a safe. The contents of the safe were bank-notes and Treasury notes to the value of £12,471, and Goddard removed £12,000 to a safe-deposit in Pall Mall, where he was known as Joseph Eales. This transfer was observed with lively interest by detectives who were shadowing the sergeant, for his police pay had never exceeded £6 15s. a week; moreover, they knew that he had bought a house for £1,700 and a motor-car for £400, and that there was £700 to his credit in a bank-deposit account. Goddard was questioned, and a week or two later was dismissed from the police. He was then arrested on a charge of having received bribes from Mrs. Meyrick, Luigi Achille Ribuffi, a restaurant and night-club manager, and Anna Gadda, a lodging-house owner. The prosecution of Goddard, Mrs. Meyrick and Ribuffi filled columns of newspaper space, for the challenge to police integrity upset the complacency of thousands who had never entered a night club and who had been brought up to believe that graft was an American invention. Goddard denied that his possession of more than £18,000 had any connexion with the duty entrusted to him for the twelve previous years of keeping observation on night clubs and houses of ill-repute, and Mrs. Meyrick and Ribuffi also declared that they had never bribed the sergeant. But at the Old Bailey Mr. Justice Avory and the jury were impressed by certain sequences of numbers on bank-notes found in the safe in Pall Mall; £260 was proved to have passed through the banking account of Ribuffi, £155 through the account of Mrs. Meyrick, and £500 through that of Mrs. Gadda; in several instances the notes found in the safe and traced

to these accounts ran in sequence. Goddard said that these notes had come into his possession by coincidence, and he told a remarkable story to explain how it was that he had £18,000 to save. He told the jury that between 1914 and 1928 he had won £7,000 or £8,000 by backing race-horses, that he had made a profit of £5,000 in five years from speculations in song-copyrights, that £4,000 had been the reward of his enterprise in financing sweetstuff stalls at the Wembley Exhibition, that he had made £2,000 or £3,000 more by speculating in foreign currency, and that he had always been a total abstainer. He claimed that he had been instrumental in getting evidence about, or assisting in raids upon, one hundred and twenty-six night clubs. Against this, the Crown submitted instances in which Goddard had reported that there were no grounds for proceedings against certain clubs, but that when these clubs were raided without his cognizance the police found drinks being served at forbidden hours. Goddard was found guilty and was sent to hard labour for eighteen months. He was also fined £2,000 and ordered to pay the costs of the prosecution. Ribuffi and Mrs. Meyrick were each sentenced to fifteen months hard labour.

That, however, was not the end of the matter. Goddard's £12,471 was still in the hands of the police—it had been something of an embarrassment to them, for when the notes were in a safe in Scotland Yard there was an alarm of a plot by bandits to attack the police guard. The Home Secretary instructed Lord Byng to retain the money, but Mr. Justice Rowlatt found, when the issue was tried in the King's Bench Division, that there was no proof that Goddard had received all the money corruptly. The dismissed and convicted sergeant was awarded £8,000 of his hoard and Lord Byng was admonished from the Bench for having exceeded his powers.

Goddard was arrested in October, 1928, and the

ownership of his safe-deposit wealth was not decided until December, 1929. During those months the foolish myth of the gaiety of London "night life" became tattered and faded beyond repair. At the police court, again at the Old Bailey, and once more in the King's Bench court, there had been a procession of witnesses from the Soho back-streets, whose implied testimony to the sordidness of the gay life had been more eloquent than their spoken evidence—convicted brothel-keepers, proprietors of shady and shabby restaurants, street bookmakers, managers of mysteriously "social" clubs. The guilt or innocence of one policeman was a relatively small issue in this wholesale indictment of the legend of a London Left Bank, a glittering, paganly joyous refuge from Dora.

CHAPTER III

LABOUR MILITANT

The State was like a sick body which had lately taken physick, whose humours were not yet well settled.

—ROBERT BURTON.

From Khaki to Dungarees—A Million on the Dole—Lewis Guns in Glasgow—Aggressive Labour—The Miner and the Duke—Government Extravagance—Police and Railway Strikes—Volunteers—Mr. Thomas Weeps—The Sankey Report—Council of Action and Triple Alliance—Labour Defeated.

THE acknowledgment, "Victory, Thanks to the Boys," which had been written in letters of fire on the night sky above Hyde Park, had not prevented some of "the boys" from displaying a dangerous impatience with demobilization delays. In the first week of 1919 there were disturbing incidents at Folkestone and Dover, when several thousand men left their rest-camps and held meetings in the towns to protest against the postponement of their return to civil life. Folkestone was closed as a port of embarkation for France, and the colours of the Guards, which should have left London for Cologne on January 4, had to be marched back to barracks at the last moment. Army Service Corps men at Osterley Park left their camp and drove to Whitehall to urge their grievances; there were demonstrations at Brighton and other places, and the Navy helped, with demonstrations at Rosyth, to give warning of a dangerous tension. The tension was a little relieved by the announcement of special rates of pay for the Army of Occupation, with bonuses of ten shillings a week for privates, but these did not completely silence the protests of men who were both heartily

sick of khaki employment and afraid that their chances of any other kind of employment were being spoiled by wasted weeks in the Army. Demonstrations in Whitehall were repeated and there was an awkward occasion in February when a couple of hundred men who had gathered on the Horse Guards parade had to be shepherded to Wellington Barracks. The worst outbreak of all occurred among Canadian troops awaiting demobilization at Kinmel Park, in North Wales; five men were killed, and twenty-one men and two officers were injured in rioting there in March. A few days later overseas and American soldiers fought the police in Aldwych, and a dozen police, soldiers and civilians were hurt. Later in the year men belonging to West Country and Midland regiments refused to embark for foreign service and had to be marched to the docks under arrest. It was not uncommon for outgoing drafts to sing "The Red Flag", though this was probably an expression of the traditional grouching humour of the Army rather than a serious affirmation of revolutionary sentiment. Still, it was all very alarming to nervous citizens haunted by the bogey of Bolshevism.

There were five million men to be transferred from the Army to civil life. It was impossible for industry, disorganized by the War, to take them back in mass, and there was as much danger in releasing men prematurely as there was in keeping them too long in khaki. In the circumstances, demobilization was remarkably rapid. By the middle of January nearly half a million men had passed through the dispersal depots, and the process continued at the rate of fifty thousand a day. The demilitarization of a nation in arms was carried out, in spite of the grumbling, with surprising smoothness, and, considering the complexity of the task—there were hundreds of thousands of munition workers to be restored to peace production as well—the Government was entitled to congratulate itself

on its successful handling of the business. But it was expensive. Immediately after the Armistice an "unemployment donation" of twenty-nine shillings a week for men, and twenty-five shillings a week for women had been instituted. As by February there were 948,000 out of work—a figure that increased in March to 1,060,245—the donation was an enormous liability, and the payments were reduced by nine shillings a week, in the men's case, and five shillings for women. In the first year the donations cost the country £35,000,000.

Parliament soon became uneasy about both the principle of the donations and their cost. It is interesting to note that in the first full-dress debate on the matter in the Commons the Conservative spokesman, Colonel Gretton, objected mainly to the ruinous cost, and a Labour leader, Mr. Clynes, objected mainly to the ruinous principle. Even as late as February, 1921, Mr. Clynes was attacking the scheme as "a process of almsgiving". The newspapers had already discovered the description that was to apply permanently to all forms of unemployment pay: "A Million People Receiving Doles" said the headlines as early as April, 1919; and the name, which was fair comment on the unemployment donation, stuck when the donation became unemployment insurance, with a contributory basis, in November, 1920.

It was impossible to do without the dole. The workers who *were* working presented a sufficient danger to industrial security, without adding a million starving workless to the risks. The first months of 1919 were a crescendo of unrest. The year began with the threat of a police strike. Then the boilermakers and shipwrights presented a demand for shorter hours, and struck when it was refused. In Belfast they were supported by the municipal employees in the gas and electricity works, and the city's light, as well as power for mills, factories, bakeries and tramways,

was cut off. Ten thousand ship repairers in London struck for an increase of fifteen shillings a week, dock workers struck in Manchester and Salford, engineers struck in Leith and electrical workers in South Wales. Twenty thousand Clydeside strikers marched to the Glasgow tramway power station to call upon the men there to stop work, and then invested the City Chambers. They induced the Lord Provost to telegraph to Mr. Lloyd George conveying a demand that the Government should force the employers to surrender. If the Government did not intervene, they said, they would waste no further time on "constitutional methods", but adopt "any other methods which they might consider would be likely to advance their cause". The Government rejected the demand, and there was rioting in the heart of Glasgow; the strikers pelted the police with stones and bottles, and the police charged the strikers with drawn truncheons; tramcars were overturned, windows were broken and shops were looted; steel-helmeted troops, equipped with trench mortars and Lewis guns, were drafted into the city. The men sent a deputation to ask London engineers to declare an immediate general strike "with the object of closing every industry in London".

Although London had its own troubles—the Underground railway services were paralysed by a strike of motor-men—the electrical engineers announced that the capital would be "plunged into darkness", its factories deprived of power, and its tramways brought to a standstill on February 6, unless the Government gave way in the Clyde dispute. The Government's reply was to promulgate a regulation under the Defence of the Realm Act, imposing a penalty of six months' imprisonment on any electrical worker who ceased work without notice. The electricians accepted the warning, postponed their strike indefinitely, and nervous Londoners breathed more freely. Even with

this relief, there were very few people to agree with Lord Leverhulme's breezy assertion, in the House of Lords a day or two later, that industrial unrest was "the healthiest sign in the country", and that there was no need to be afraid of Labour. Before the month was out the Miners' Federation had decided to ballot on the question of a strike for higher wages and shorter hours. They had a majority of half a million in favour of a strike, but the crisis was postponed by the appointment of a Coal Commission. The miners' associates in the great Triple Alliance of unions, the railwaymen and the transport workers, were also pressing for shorter hours. It was impossible to escape from wars and rumours of wars, not only in industry but in fields of employment where most stability was expected. Civil servants in conference at the Albert Hall sang "The Red Flag". The police were fighting for recognition of their union.

In May two British airmen, Harry Hawker and Commander Mackenzie Grieve, set out from Newfoundland in the first attempt to cross the Atlantic in an aeroplane, and for a week nothing was heard of them: when it became known that they had been saved from their derelict machine in mid-ocean by a small Danish steamer, *The Times* said it was "the best news since the Armistice". But almost before newspaper readers had had time to rejoice, they were staggered by what seemed almost the worst news since the Armistice. By a majority of ten to one the Police Union had balloted in favour of a strike. If the police "went Bolshie" what hope was there of security anywhere? A few days after the funeral cortège of Nurse Cavell had passed through the streets of Westminster to the Abbey, a procession of another sort—unemployed ex-Service men—marched through the same streets to the House of Commons, swept away a line of mounted police in Parliament Square, and penetrated to the very

doors of the house before they were scattered by reinforcements of police.

The miners, the Old Guard of militant Labour who were to be the last to surrender in the trade union Waterloo in 1926, had accepted the truce of the Coal Commission as a new opportunity for an offensive. Full-page reports of the proceedings, day by day, in *The Times*, gave them a medium for propaganda they could never have obtained in any other way, and, day by day, in evidence and in the cross-examination of witnesses, they hammered at their case—the poverty and perils of the miners, the irresponsibility of the colliery-owners, the illegality of mineral royalties, and thence to the ethical necessity of nationalization, the justice of confiscation. For it was an ethical, much more than an economic, case that Mr. Robert Smillie, the miners' president, argued.

A Scot, a Covenanter of trade unionism, Robert Smillie had the strength of his resentment of the colliery-village squalor into which he had been born, and the strength of his compassion for those who, still, were being born to squalor and danger. Within the limits of the ethical argument he was magnificently effective; as, when cross-examining the Duke of Hamilton's agent, he contrasted Hamilton Palace, in the splendour of its three hundred and sixty-five windows, with "just outside the wall, some of the most miserable homes in Great Britain" where miners' families were living five and six to a room. But there was no need to stress the contrasts. They were dramatically evident in the proceedings of the Commission, which allowed a cottage-born pitman to call upon the Duke of Northumberland—possessor of a gross income of £82,000 a year—for an account of his stewardship. In the Duke the miners' president was opposed by a conviction as passionately sincere as his own. Their encounter was the most exciting moment in the inquiry. Smillie

pressed the question of the royalty-owner's responsibility for the welfare of the men in the pits. The Duke's conscience was clear; he had inserted in his colliery leases the provision that cottages should be kept in proper repair, and it was for local authorities to give notice to the colliery owners if the cottages were not in proper order.

Smillie asked, "Supposing the colliery owners neglected to pay you the royalty-rents stated in your lease, would you leave it to the local authorities to decide whether they should pay you or not?" The Duke answered, "Certainly not."

As the hereditary owners of huge mineral royalties followed one another in the witness-chair, the miners' spokesmen challenged each to prove his title to his lands. Mr. Frank Hodges discomfited the Marquess of Bute by telling him that he owed "all the lordships of Miskin, Glynrhondda, Llangrisant and Pentrych and Clun, and about thirty more in Monmouthshire and Breconshire—one of the greatest properties ever known to be granted to anyone"—to the signature of a boy of ten, Edward the Sixth. Such successes were dangerous. The whole trend of the miners' argument confirmed the warnings of Coalition Ministers, that post-War industrial agitation was not directed to a legitimate industrial end, but was subversive political action. This was true, and it arose largely from the same cause that made these gentlemen Coalition Ministers. In Parliament the representatives of five million voters had a majority over the representatives of four and a half million voters that made Parliamentary procedure farcical; the four and a half million were virtually disfranchised, and "direct action"—the strike—was the only assertion of will left to the workers.

One more provocation was conveniently summed up in the word "Slough". The huge Government motor works there was a by-word for waste. Six hundred acres—some

of the best wheat land in the county—had been covered with unnecessary buildings at a cost of £1,665,000; that, at any rate, was the charge brought against the Ministry of Munitions. One obscure member of the staff at Slough became a national figure; he was ninety-two, he had been pensioned off by the Great Western Railway twenty-two years before, and yet the Government was paying him four pounds a week for services that nobody could define. All money was easy money to Government departments. Why shouldn't the working man have his share? He was not likely to be impressed by Cabinet Ministers' sermons on the wastefulness of strikes when he considered the wastefulness of Cabinet Ministers.

Where the Cabinet Ministers exaggerated and distorted was in alleging a Bolshevik purpose in direct action. Partly strikes expressed the vanity of the skilled workman—swollen by the flattery of Mr. Lloyd George in his war-time appeals for increased production, and fortified by high war-time rates of wages—a vanity pathetically unaware that the superiority of skilled workmanship was challenged by new methods of production; partly they expressed mere anger and hysterical violence, partly a simple eagerness to get as much for as little as possible. But there was hardly an iota of hard, cold Leninism. The kind of society that most trade unionists wanted was described by Mr. J. H. Thomas in his book *When Labour Rules* (published in 1920), and it was altogether a snigger, smugger society than Communism contemplated—a Y.M.C.A. Sybaris in which all the arduous and dirty work would be passed on to machines, while the citizen only did enough to justify working-class complacency; with gymnastics for all, and “a great Army of University Extension lecturers” to keep up the intellectual tone.

The police strike, when it came in August, was less than half-hearted so far as London was concerned—of

19,000 men only 1,056 came out—but it had alarming developments in Liverpool. There 930 policemen struck, against 2,100 who stayed on duty, and in two days there were two hundred arrests for looting. The situation did not become manageable until troops were called in. There were actually bayonet charges.

The Glasgow and Liverpool outbreaks, with their primitive confusion of bricks and bottles, batons and bayonets, looters and Lewis-gunners, were shocking and not really significant. They illustrate a brutality left over from war-time feeling: they are survivals, not omens. On the other hand, the national railway strike of September, 1919, is a genuine post-War specimen. It had special characteristics, distinguishing it from earlier conflicts, and prefiguring the important battles of the next seven years; it fixed new lines of action for both sides, and was a rehearsal for the Triple Alliance threat of 1921, as that was a rehearsal for the General Strike of 1926. In these post-War crises Mr. and Mrs. Everyman have felt far more deeply involved than they were involved, materially or emotionally, in pre-War crises. The ultimate issues have been presented broadly enough—"Challenge to the Constitution", "Attempt to impose the will of a section on the community", "Capitalist attack on the workers' standard of living", and so on; but the details in dispute have been obscured by jargon—"standardization", "the datum line", "ratio of profits" and other technicalities of the new industrialism.

The disputed details of the railway strike concerned the standardization of wages. Concessions already obtained by the railwaymen had added sixty-five millions to the wages bill, imposing a fifty per cent. increase on passenger fares and more than fifty per cent. on goods rates. Industry and all the common necessities were carrying unbearable weight because of the high level of railway wages; but

when the cost-of-living figure stood at 110 above the pre-War standard it was not to be expected of the railway-men that they should make shift with lower pay. The railway strike—the first national conflict in industry of the post-War period—began at midnight on September 26.

All the solemnities appropriate to an outbreak of war were observed. Field-Marshal Haig, Commander-in-Chief of the Home forces, and Major-General Feilding, in command of the London District, were summoned to conference with the Cabinet. There was a call for volunteers—and it was this that gave the strike its distinctive post-War note. A volunteer force answered more than practical necessities; it was the mobilization of middle-class-consciousness, a consolidation of ex-officer sentiment. Given any reasonable—or even unreasonable—rallying cry, it was easy to raise armies in the years immediately following the disbandment of an army. The “captains” who strove pathetically to confer permanence on their temporary rank, the men to whom demobilization had been a removal of crutches, the thousands in whom a nostalgia for the comfort of discipline and concerted action was working, stiffened up the sinews and summoned up the blood at the call. The volunteer force—any volunteer force—was assured of success. Apart from the yearning to be “back in the army again, Sergeant”, apart from the fulfilment of emotional cravings, these emergency armies had, at any time, a more than adequate reserve of man-power. There were 1,060,240 unemployed in the autumn of 1919; when the next crisis arose, in the middle of 1921, there were 1,207,000 unemployed apart from the men who were locked out; and the number had increased when the final trial of strength came in 1926. Their existence made the Downing Street recruiting sergeant’s job a sinecure—or any recruiting sergeant’s. Men rushed to join the strike-breaking volunteers in 1919 and the Defence Force in

1921; but men also rushed as impetuously to join the Spanish Foreign Legion, which made no claim upon sentiment, in 1923. In 1919 the volunteers were, beyond doubt, useful; they did run trains; but they were even more valuable to the Government as a demonstration of the nation's righteous resentment of proletarian aggression. They kept the trains going—good: they kept confidence going—ininitely better!

The strike established all the conventions that were to be sedulously observed on occasions of the kind during the next seven years. The Prime Minister—it was Mr. Lloyd George then, it was Mr. Baldwin later, the difference was unimportant—affirmed the nation's resolve to resist the challenge to the fundamental principles of the constitution. The strikers affirmed, much less effectively because they had much less effective channels of propaganda, the workers' resolve to resist the brutal capitalist challenge to their standard of living. At the critical moment Mr. J. H. Thomas burst into tears. The volunteers lined up. Mr. and Mrs. Everyman suffered a great deal of material inconvenience, and enjoyed a spiritual exaltation. And at the end it was extremely difficult to be sure who had won.

For ten days the strike dragged on. On the first day or two the paralysis of the railways throughout the country was nearly complete. Then the volunteers proved their practical value; more and more trains were run. Hyde Park had been converted into a depot for milk supplies; in 1921 Hyde Park was to be converted into a depot for milk supplies; in 1926—for the third and last time—Hyde Park was converted into a depot for milk supplies. Hyde Park, in fact, serves as a barometer of industrial storm. The solidarity of the proletariat, as in 1921 and 1926, was incomplete, and a great many men "trickled" back to work throughout the struggle.

The ten days of stoppage gave Cabinet Ministers and

Union leaders an opportunity to exhibit their address in the lists, to make magnanimous overtures, to display heroic resolution—and to come in the end to compromise. The Government proposed a seven days' truce, and the railwaymen rejected it. Arbitration was offered and refused. Then, for no discoverable reason, a settlement was reached. Work was to be resumed forthwith; negotiations were to be continued with the understanding that they would be completed before the end of the year; wages were to be stabilized at the existing level for twelve months; no group of railwaymen was to receive less than 51s. so long as the cost of living was not less than 110 per cent. above pre-War level: there was to be harmony between the railwaymen who had struck and the railwaymen who had not. At a mass meeting of the N.U.R. at the Albert Hall Mr. Cramp, the President, claimed a victory. His followers seemed doubtful of their triumph. In fact, the only point in which the peace terms differed from the offer made to the railwaymen before the strike was in the stabilization of wages at the existing level until September 30, 1920, instead of December 31, 1919. As it was certain that prices would not fall before September, 1920, to a point at which the reduction of wages would have become operative under previous arrangements, the gain to the railwaymen, as against their ten days' loss of pay and the depletion of their Union funds by ten days' strike pay, was not obtrusive.

It was regrettable, as a matter of historical propriety, that the railwaymen should have launched the first major offensive. That privilege should have been the miners'. No workers had had to meet such desperately harsh conditions of existence as the miners, none lived, as a matter of workaday routine, so close to mortal danger, and consequently none were more steadfast in resentment, or more careless of discomforts of industrial warfare. Their segre-

gation in their villages clustered round the pitheads, their separation, sharper than in any other industry, gave them a solidarity that was almost racial. They were the storm troops of trade unionism, the first wave of the attack, the last line of defence. And they were matched by the most reactionary group of employers. The mine-owners were the Bourbons of industry—learning nothing and forgetting nothing. The miners have been guilty of stupidity, of ignorance, of sentimental refusal to accommodate themselves to economic facts: but it is impossible not to find them admirable in their endurance, their brotherhood, their determination to fight out to the last crust the battle which they believed, with dour sincerity, to be the battle of all workers. In 1919 the railwaymen for a moment usurped their rôle. But the intrusion lasted only a moment.

The Coal Commission had presented its final reports in June, 1919. There were fourteen commissioners, and there were four reports. One was signed by the Chairman, Mr. Justice Sankey, alone: one by the miners' representatives and the socialist doctrinaires: one by the mine-owners: and one by a solitary theorist, Sir Arthur Duckham: and by a majority of nine to five the commissioners declared in favour of nationalization. The miners, it seemed, had won. They had not asked for the Commission, it had been thrust upon them by the Prime Minister, it had accepted their argument, and they waited for the Government to honour the Commissions' findings. Of course, the Government did nothing of the kind. It was an awkward situation. Two months after the reports had been submitted the Prime Minister promised that he would shortly announce the Government's policy, but the possibility of juggling with the situation was beyond even Mr. Lloyd George's powers of prestidigitation. Ten days later the truth had to come out. Mr. Lloyd George said that the Government had rejected the principle of national-

ization. All that the miners had achieved by argument, by patiently constitutional process, in the Commission, was lost. They had appealed to reason, they had appealed effectively, but all that they had achieved was of no effect in the face of the Government's denial. From that moment, they were irreconcilable—they had taken the appointment of the Sankey Commission as an implied pledge that its finding would be implemented, and when that was not done their faith in any pledge the Government might give was destroyed.

There was a year's interval, however, before the first open declaration of war. First of all came the usual protracted, bewildering wrangle over technicalities—the miners claimed an increase of 2*s.* in wages, irrespective of the ruling conditions of the industry; the coalowners offered an advance of 1*s.* a day for an output of 240,000,000 tons, 1*s.* 6*d.* a day for an output of 244,000,000 tons, and 2*s.* a day for an output of 248,000,000 tons. The strike began on October 16 and ended on November 4. By the peace terms the miners gained their unconditional increase of 2*s.* a day—but only for two months. The Prime Minister had now become glib in the vocabulary of industrial conflict. A state of war had arisen—the Government were prepared to meet the emergency—thanks to a titanic energy of statesmanship the nation was ensured against famine, rapine, and immediate dissolution. Stern economies were dictated—the electric light advertisements in Piccadilly were darkened, householders were not allowed to buy more than one hundredweight of coal a week and Mr. Everyman was called upon to use as little electricity and gas as was consistent with an ascetic existence. It is possible that the emergency required these measures. It is probable that the Government was unwilling to waste the opportunity of impressing upon the public how very inconvenient a coal strike could be.

The strike afforded a pretext for the Emergency Powers Act, which gave the Government the right to take such measures as it saw fit to deal with "any widespread emergency which might threaten the life of the community as a whole". Since the Government was left to be the sole judge of what constituted such an emergency, it was a comprehensive piece of legislation. However, the other side could make no effective protest against high-handed assumption of power. A month or two earlier a Labour and trade union conference had appointed a Council of Action of twenty-six men whose authority, in theory at any rate, was as arbitrary as that of any Cabinet committee working under the Emergency Powers Act. After the six hundred delegates to the conference, singing, cheering, waving red handkerchiefs, had elected the Council, one of its members, Mr. Thomas, declared his belief that their decision went "beyond a mere strike". There could be no more eloquent testimony to the tension of the time than the fact that the future prophet of Empire should then have seemed revolutionary. He diagnosed the sickness of society in terms that would have been seconded by Trotsky, and declared, "Only desperate and dangerous methods can provide a remedy." The Prime Minister replied by deriding the Council of Action as "the swinging of a sledge-hammer before an open door", and denouncing it as "one of the most formidable challenges ever given to democracy".

They were violent days. At the Albert Hall Colonel Malone, M.P., hoped that the Russian revolution would soon be followed by a British revolution, and asked, "What are a few Churchills and Curzons on lamp-posts compared to the massacre of thousands of human beings?" The query caused him to be sentenced to six months in the second division.

The Council of Action did not live long—the logic of

its being was too “desperate and dangerous” for most of its members, who were respectable trade union officials. But the Emergency Powers Act continued to be available to the Government. In March, 1921, it was made effective for the first time, when a new wages dispute in the coalfields led to a stoppage—it seemed to be impossible to decide whether it was a lock-out or a strike—and a State of Emergency was proclaimed. The Miners’ Federation had ordered the withdrawal of the pump-men, and scores of mines were in danger of flooding. It was the Government’s duty to save the mines, said the Prime Minister; the Services reserves were called up and patriotic citizens were invited to join a Defence Force. The miners, too, had their reserves; and the railwaymen and transport workers were now called upon to fulfil the obligations of membership of the Triple Alliance, and notice was given of a strike of the two supporting unions on April 12.

The Triple Alliance, which had been established in 1915, had never been brought to the test of direct action, and when the test was applied the Alliance crumbled. The last hours before the ultimatum expired were crammed with conferences, but the miners would not move from their demand for a national scale of wages, the mine-owners would not move from their demand for settlements by districts and their refusal to pool profits, and the Government would not move from its refusal to subsidize the industry. The strike, which would in effect have anticipated the General Strike by five years, seemed inevitable. It was avoided because the miners’ secretary, Mr. Frank Hodges, dropped a hint that the miners might consider wages reductions if they were merely temporary; this offer was immediately repudiated by the miners’ executive, but it gave the leaders of the allied unions an opportunity of escaping a conflict that they were obviously

desperately anxious to avoid. Two or three hours before the time appointed for the beginning of the strike the railwaymen and transport workers decided that if Mr. Hodges could discover a loophole it was the duty of his executive to squeeze through it. The sympathetic strike was cancelled, the Triple Alliance collapsed, and the miners were left to fight alone. It was four months before they came to terms, and in that time their funds were drained and the most powerful and warlike of all unions was deprived of its fighting power if not of its fighting spirit. When the miners went back to work in July, the first, aggressive phase of the industrial war after the War was over, the way was opened to tranquillity.

CHAPTER IV

THE IRISH WAR

The world owes much to little nations. . . . The heroic deeds that thrill humanity through generations were the deeds of little nations fighting for their freedom. . . . God has chosen little nations as the vessels by which He carries His choicest wines to the lips of humanity to rejoice their hearts, to exalt their vision, to stimulate and strengthen their faith.

DAVID LLOYD GEORGE.

Sinn Fein—The Rebel on the Bicycle—Burning Out the R.I.C.—Prison-Breaking—The Black and Tans—Murder and Pillage—Bloody Sunday—Terence MacSwiney's Martyrdom—The I.R.A. in London—The Burning of Cork—War in Shepherd's Bush—Sir Henry Wilson's End.

IF the ordinary elector stopped to think about the results of the Khaki election of 1918—there is no evidence that he did—he found one remarkable, though not at first sight sufficiently ominous, change in the state of Parties. For many General Elections before the War the returns from Ireland had been foregone conclusions—there were certain to be about eighty Nationalists; but in the 1918 Parliament there were only seven Nationalists. Instead there were seventy-three nominal members labelled, unfamiliarly, Sinn Fein; their membership of the Commons was nominal because none of them took their seats at Westminster. By the beginning of 1919 the significance of the new Irish Party began to be unpleasantly apparent. There were reports from Ireland of policemen being fired on as they patrolled their beats in country districts, for, though hardly anybody in England was aware of it, the Government of the Irish Republic had declared

war on Great Britain, and the campaign of ambush and assassination that was to last for nearly three years had begun.

Sinn Fein was the invention of a mild, bookish Dublin compositor named Arthur Griffith. While the traditionalist leaders in the Imperial Parliament—Redmond, Dillon, Devlin, Healy—were debating, obstructing, manœuvring, Arthur Griffith sat in the Kildare Street library reading the history of revolutionary movements in Europe, and, in particular, the history of the Separatist movement in Hungary in the nineteenth century. His reading led him to the discovery of a fundamental defect in all Irish revolutionary movements; Tone, Emmett, the nineteenth-century Republicans, had begun at the wrong end; they had busied themselves with the destruction of the old Ireland of alien domination before they had planned a new Ireland to replace the thing they sought to destroy. Armed rebellion was the wasted striking of a match if no bonfire had been prepared. Griffith proposed a new method—to bring a self-governing Ireland into being first, and to fight for it, if necessary, afterwards.

Griffith called his new method Sinn Fein—"ourselves". The Irish themselves, without Redmondite reference to the British Parliament, were to set up their own Parliament, their own judicature, their own revenue system, and their own police, while the alien scaffolding of government was to be undermined by being ignored. Theoretically it was a system of passive, or at any rate pacific, resistance. Practically it employed violence. For the Sinn Fein police was the Irish Republican Army, and as recently as 1916 the Irish Republican Army had been in action against the "hereditary enemy" in the Easter Week campaign, and the executive of Sinn Fein was mainly composed of men who had been "out" in the battle of the Post Office and Jacobs' biscuit factory. The leader of the Party, Eamonn De

Valera, was the last of the Easter leaders to surrender, and had been sentenced to life imprisonment for his part in the rising. He followed an Irish revolutionary tradition in being incompletely Irish. He was born in New York, the son of a Spaniard and an Irishwoman, but this did not make him less acceptable to rebels who had been led in Easter Week by the son of an Englishman and an Irishwoman. Another coincidence, of which much or little can be made, is that both Padraic Pearse, the 1916 commander-in-chief, and Eamonn De Valera were schoolmasters.

Besides its affiliation with the I.R.A. there were other reasons why Sinn Fein could not establish itself as peacefully as Arthur Griffith supposed when he adumbrated the scheme. There was little use in establishing Irish courts if the Irish people continued to settle their differences in the Crown courts, so litigants had to be discouraged from appealing to the alien law. The decrees of the Irish courts had to be enforced. The processes of alien law had to be obstructed. In effect it was necessary to shoot obtuse civilians and ambush the Royal Irish Constabulary if Sinn Fein law was to be respected. By the beginning of 1919 Sinn Fein had become definitely militant and terrorist, and in the following two years the situation was controlled not by Griffith, the ideologist, nor De Valera, the political doctrinaire, but by Michael Collins, a former Post Office clerk who had become the organizer of assassination and guerrilla warfare.

Michael Collins directed a revolution from a bicycle. He was ready, in an emergency, to do his own shooting—he led a party that waited in vain to assassinate the Viceroy, Lord French—but far more effective than any revolver was his bicycle, as it carried him from his office as Minister of Finance to his office as Director of I.R.A. Intelligence; to Vaughan's Hotel, where he held audience nightly in the smoke-room; to Kirwan's public-house, where

he planned gaol escapes with warders from Mountjoy Prison; to rendezvous with his agents in the political branch of the Dublin Metropolitan Police, or to the secret bomb-factory beneath a bicycle-shop. For three years he was "on the run", the most urgently wanted of all the rebel leaders; but he never used a disguise, and he usually cycled about the city unaccompanied. It was a Sinn Fein boast that "Lord French, who cannot go anywhere without an escort, is much more on the run than Mick Collins, who goes openly round Dublin alone". That was partly the secret of Collins's immunity; at a time when his capture was worth £40,000 he was repeatedly held up in the streets by military pickets, searched, and allowed to pass, for the soldiers did not dream of identifying the friendly fellow, with the cheerfully boyish grin, as the legendary master-assassin. A still more effective defence was his elaborate organization of intelligence. He had spies and agents in the post-offices, on the mail-boats, in every Government department, in the prisons, the R.I.C. barracks, in Dublin Castle itself. Detectives in the political service brought him news of intended raids and arrests before the raiding troops or police had been detailed for the duty. Several times he was saved from capture by military patrols by the fact that he was in the company of police officials who vouched for him as a friend. A third element in his elusiveness was luck as extraordinary as his courage and cunning. Again and again he left houses that were raided a minute or two later, or arrived a minute or two after the searchers and stood in the kerbside crowd to watch the Crossley tenders drive back to barracks without him. His most dangerous enemy was another man on a bicycle. This was Mr. W. C. F. Redmond, a police commissioner, who was brought from Belfast for the specific purpose of catching Collins, and nearly caught him less than a week after his arrival. Collins observed, "If we don't get that

man he'll get us, and soon." Three nights later Mr. Redmond was caught off his bicycle, walking down Harcourt Street, and shot dead. Zeal and efficiency did not promote length of life among detectives and policemen. Mr. Lloyd George might proclaim that "we have got murder by the throat", but British political agents were safe only behind the walls of Dublin Castle, and the Royal Irish Constabulary were virtually prisoners in their barracks.

By the beginning of 1920 the new Irish strategy had so far succeeded that the R.I.C., which had maintained authority in spite of Fenians and Molly Maguires, was completely defeated. The Nationalists had accepted the R.I.C., since they accepted the law of which the R.I.C. was guardian, and the men in the green uniform were their fellow-countrymen. For generations the strength of the Constabulary was that its members were Irishmen, but with the coming of Sinn Féin that was to prove its weakness. The policeman found himself cut off from his friends and neighbours, boycotted and in daily danger of assassination. If he resigned from the force he lost his pension, but if he did not resign his chance of surviving to enjoy his pension was inconsiderable. So, in many cases he resigned; in many other cases he was killed or disabled. Before 1920 was many weeks old even barracks ceased to be a protection for the Constabulary; in January Carrigtwohill Barracks, in County Cork, was besieged, surrendered after several hours' fighting, and was burned down. It was the first barracks to be captured in open fighting, but soon the South was dotted with burnt-out barracks. Military recruiting posters at that time invited young men to "Join the Army and see the World", and Dublin street humorists added an invitation to "Join the R.I.C. and see the next World". Since Irishmen were naturally diffident about accepting the invitation it became necessary to find recruits

who were not susceptible to moral pressure. The Black and Tans arrived.

This parti-coloured force, nominally auxiliary police but actually irregular soldiery, was an admirable expression of Coalition policy. There were two ways in which the situation that developed in Ireland in 1919 might have been faced—by making peace or by making war. But Mr. Lloyd George did neither. He had lost the habit of facing situations. Versailles had proved that there was no international disagreement that could not be arranged, smoothed over, neatly compromised, given the presence of a Welshman sufficiently supple, persuasive, and aware of human weaknesses. It would have been strange if he had not enjoyed the knowledge that he was that Welshman, and had not applied the same technique of evasion and opportunism to other emergencies. Besides, making the best of both worlds was not only a joyous exercise of his peculiar talents, it was a necessity of existence for the Prime Minister of the Coalition. The Conservative majority would not allow him to make peace, that is, offer such terms as would be accepted by Sinn Féin—were, in fact, accepted two and a half years later. As for making war by proclaiming martial law in the South of Ireland—that was bound to be unpopular for a variety of reasons. One was that inconvenient hyphenation with which President Wilson had complicated the Versailles discussions, “self-determination”. There were his own rhapsodies on the “small-nation-fighting-for-freedom” theme at a time when Belgium had been the best propaganda-card to play. The implications of this oratorical enthusiasm for national liberty could be evaded, but they could not be brutally denied by a direct declaration of war. Moreover it would have been extremely difficult to obtain the taxpayers’ consent in advance to the expense of a martial-law regime, with the necessary concentration of troops;



WAR IN IRELAND

Republicans surrendering to Auxiliaries after a skirmish at Tralee

it was much better, if money had to be spent, to present the bill afterwards. (In the end Great Britain paid the Irish Free State four million pounds in compensation for damage caused by the Crown Forces in the process of keeping order in Ireland.)

The first step in quelling Sinn Fein was the arrest of the Republican leaders and the internment of the rank and file. This had serious disadvantages. One was that the internment camps merely improved the discipline and efficiency of the I.R.A. When they were at liberty the Republicans had to drill by stealth, in the camps they drilled openly: the position was summed up by the internee who wrote blithely to his friends, "Our drill is improving every day, we shall be a crack company when we come out." To volunteer for service in the I.R.A. might mean, with the luck of internment, nothing more arduous than indefinite leisure behind barbed wire, with three substantial meals a day provided by the enemy. A second disadvantage of the policy was that the leaders would not stay in prison. In Lincoln Prison Mr. De Valera, helping the chaplain at Mass, noticed that the priest sometimes carelessly left his keys lying about, and he made an impression, on candle-drippings, of the wards of the most important key. A drawing of the key was ingeniously worked into the design of a Christmas card by another imprisoned leader, Mr. Sean Milroy, and sent, through a friend in Sheffield, to Michael Collins. Keys and files were baked in cakes and sent to the prisoners, and on February 3, 1919, Mr. De Valera, Mr. Milroy, and Mr. Sean McGarry walked out of a side gate of the prison. The escape was nearly frustrated at the last second. Collins had gone to Lincoln, also provided with a key, and waited for the prisoners at the gate; when he saw them approaching he thrust his key into the lock, tried to turn it—and it broke; De Valera reached the last barrier to hear Collins's despairing whisper, "I've broken

the key in the lock, Dev." De Valera jabbed furiously at the lock with his own key, succeeded in pushing out the broken key, and opened the gate. He was taken by taxi to Manchester, and thence to Liverpool, and a little later was stowed away in an Atlantic liner. He was next heard of in America, persuading Irish-Americans to subscribe to the Sinn Fein "National Loan". Other leaders were equally difficult to cage; twenty escaped at once over the wall of Mountjoy Prison, Dublin: a young man named Fleming invented a form of protest known as "smashing up"; he tore up his convict uniform, destroyed all articles in his cell, and as fast as they were replaced worked free from his handcuffs and continued the destruction. A special "unbreakable" cell was built for him, but he wrecked it. The hunger-strike was another weapon used successfully by men who were imprisoned as criminals and demanded treatment as political prisoners.

But the gravest disadvantage of the system of round-ups and internments was that it did not affect the most dangerous section of the Republican forces. Any District Inspector could detect the existence of a company of young men in military formation, with sloped rifles, and march them off to detention, but the Sinn Fein soldier was most effective when he moved in small, apparently casual, groups, with no obtrusive rifle to advertise his trade, but with a revolver in the pocket of his mackintosh trench-coat. As the gunman could not be distinguished from the non-combatant civilian, all civilians became suspect to the police. But comprehensive suspicion did not prevent fifty-six policemen and four soldiers from being murdered in 1919 and early 1920. This death-roll was quoted by the Prime Minister as the justification of the new Auxiliary Division of the Royal Irish Constabulary. The Black and Tans were ex-officers of the British Army enlisted at £1 a day. They wore their War-time khaki, for the force was raised secretly

and the Treasury could not at first be asked for money to clothe them; and the uniform was completed by dark green Balmoral bonnets, drawn from surplus stores. The dark caps and khaki tunics suggested their nickname, but its real point lay in allusion to the pack of hounds known as the Black and Tans, and also known for its willingness to hunt and kill anything.

The Auxiliaries were not the first official murderers in Ireland. Early in 1920 a party of regular R.I.C., disguised as Sinn Feiners, forced their way into the house of Thomas McCurtain, the Republican Lord Mayor of Cork, and shot him dead before his wife's eyes. The Sinn Fein disguise was also used by police who murdered the Mayor of Limerick; in both cases it was intended to persuade the Irish people that Sinn Fein was a house divided against itself. The jury at the inquest on McCurtain refused to be persuaded and returned a verdict of wilful murder against David Lloyd George, Prime Minister of Great Britain, Lord French, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and their agents. In time every one of the police murderers was tracked by the Republicans to the remote stations to which they had been transferred, and killed. The inspector who led the gang was hidden in the Isle of Man for several months, and when he returned to Ireland was sent to Lisburn, an Orange stronghold; he was shot down as he was coming out of church. In England all that was known was that a number of Irish policemen had been treacherously murdered. Again, about the time of the McCurtain killing, England had been horrified by the assassination of Lieutenant-Colonel G. B. V. Smyth, a District Commissioner of the R.I.C., who was dragged from the smoke-room of the Cork County Club by a Sinn Fein firing-party; for, again, England did not know that, a little earlier, Smyth had addressed a party of regular R.I.C. men at Listowel, giving them authority to murder

Republicans indiscriminately. This was the legacy of the regular R.I.C. to the Black and Tans.

No tradition has ever been more devotedly maintained than this one was by the new representatives of law in Ireland. It is impossible to do justice in a chapter to the Auxiliaries' untiring energy and singleness of purpose in the service of the gospel according to Lieutenant-Colonel Smyth; the scanty acknowledgment that is possible here is based mainly on the authority of Brigadier-General F. P. Crozier, who was in command of the Auxiliary Division in 1920, and the first Governor-General of the Irish Free State, Mr. T. M. Healy, K.C. A much more striking testimonial to Black and Tan conscientiousness could be compiled from Irish Republican sources, but this would naturally be suspect.

A Resident Magistrate, Mr. Brady, was motoring near Bandon, in County Cork, when his car broke down. He asked a priest, Canon Magner, who was walking along the road, reading his office, to call a boy to help him to push the car. At that moment a lorry-load of Auxiliaries drove up. They ordered the priest to his knees, shot him, killed the boy, and then attempted to murder the magistrate. Mr. Brady, however, fled to a cottage and hid. This was inconvenient for the Black and Tans, for Mr. Brady made representations to Whitehall, and the Government could not entirely ignore the protest of one of their own servants. General Macready, the Commander-in-Chief in Ireland, was sent to Cork to hold a court-martial; one man of the party of Auxiliaries was tried for murder and found guilty, but insane. He was less fortunate than the policeman who murdered Father Griffin, a Republican cleric, and buried him in a Galway bog; no action of any kind was taken in this case.

Lieutenant-Colonel Smyth had ordered the indiscriminate murder of Republicans, but some impetuous spirits

disdained a niggling and unmanly curiosity about mere opinions, and amended the programme to, simply, indiscriminate murder. Captain Prendergast was a British officer who had been wounded in France and invalided home; he persuaded the War Office to send him on active service again, and this time he was so badly wounded in Italy that he was sent home to Fermoy. One evening in the Royal Hotel he was talking to officers of the British garrison when the Black and Tans arrived. The little company of veterans drank and gossiped about War memories, and tempers became frayed in a discussion of the comparative valour of Irish and English troops. Then Captain Prendergast said good night. As he left the hotel the Black and Tans knocked him down, dragged him by the legs to the bank of the River Blackwater, which was in flood, and threw him in. His body was recovered from the river at Clondulane, three miles below Fermoy, a month later. The murderers went back to the hotel to demand more drink, and the barmaid, who did not know of Captain Prendergast's fate, asked them to lower their voices in case Mr. Dooley, next door, should complain to the police: so the Black and Tans battered in Mr. Dooley's door, dragged him from bed and threw him into the Blackwater; he was lucky enough to be thrown up on a weir, and fled to the workhouse. Had he returned to his own home he would have seen the Auxiliaries set fire to it; he would have seen the troops of the British garrison turn out to quench the fire; and he would have seen the Black and Tans cut the fire-hoses, jump into their lorries and drive away into the night. Nobody was punished by the British authorities for the murder of this British officer. Vengeance for Captain Prendergast was left to the Irish Republican Army, and was fulfilled when a company of Auxiliaries that included a number of his murderers was caught in a disastrous ambush at Dillon's Cross.

It would be inaccurate to suggest that the Black and Tans were merely murderers. They were also thieves and incendiaries. On one night, September 22, 1920, British forces caused damage assessed at £149,000 by pillaging and burning three towns in County Clare. In two of the towns, Lahinch and Ennistymon, the arrival of the representatives of the Crown coincided with the departure of the inhabitants; men, women and children, sick, aged and infants, fled in their night attire to the neighbouring sand-hills. Their wisdom was attested by the fate of three men who remained to protect their property. They were shot dead. Ennistymon Town Hall was set on fire and more than fifty houses and shops were looted and burned. In the third town, Miltown Malbay, there was more looting and burning, and here a man aged seventy-five was murdered. In one sessions at Clare County Court the Judge (a Crown official) awarded compensation amounting to £187,046 19s. 6d. in respect of damage committed by British armed forces. This might have been a greater consolation to the pillaged inhabitants if the compensation had not been a charge on the rate-payers of County Clare—that is to say, on the victims themselves. At the following sessions the County Inspector of the R.I.C. served a notice on Judge McDonnell Bodkin forbidding him to exercise his legal function of investigating claims that reflected on the Crown forces, and followed this up by packing the court with armed police. This Cromwellian stroke saved the rate-payers the trouble of paying themselves compensation.

Occasionally Black and Tan looters were punished by the British authorities. When police highwaymen robbed Protestant, and therefore loyal, women at Trim, the officer in chief command of the Auxiliary Division handed some of the thieves to the military for trial, and sent others back to England. The soldiers did not like Black and Tans,

and those whom they tried they sent to prison. The men who had been sent to England felt aggrieved and hinted at disclosures to the Press, so they were promptly returned to Ireland. Their commander, General Crozier, resigned as a protest against this condonation of crime. Two police officers who had given evidence against the convicted robbers had to be placed under special protection for nearly three months lest they should be killed by their colleagues.

The team spirit, not only in the Auxiliary Division, but in other branches of the forces operating against Sinn Fein, was preserved by the methods that ensure a similar uniformity of ruffianism in Chicago and New York gangs to-day. General Crozier has told the story of Bowen, a former flying officer with a distinguished War record, who confided to him his difficulties as a Secret Service agent in Dublin. "He had come into conflict with some of his fellow Secret Service agents, one of whom was his superior. He had been told to get into the good graces of a certain lady and, if possible, to start a liaison with her, in order to get some information out of her. He then found that the lady in question was living with another ex-officer, who was employed on Government work, her husband being abroad on military service. On his reporting this to his superior, the latter confided in him that the woman in question possessed most important information regarding Sinn Fein and that he, Bowen, must 'put the other fellow out of the way' and take his place. This he had refused to do, but, foolishly, he had told his superior that he would cross to England to tell David Davies, an influential Welshman who had at one time been Private Secretary to Mr. Lloyd George, what had been suggested and the irregular way in which the service was being run. To this his 'comrade' replied that he, Bowen, himself, would be put away if he did not shut his mouth. False accusa-

tions and suggestions of treachery were also being brought against him, and he felt insecure. What should he do? I advised him to clear out at once, without drawing back pay or giving notice. He may have given notice of his intended departure, so as to collect the money due to him, but one night the dead body of a strange man (who had been sand-bagged) answering to the description of Bowen, was found in Merrion Square. I went to the mortuary and saw the body of Bowen. Identification was obtained by the Dublin Metropolitan police, but, of course, the fact that the wretched man was a Secret Service man never came out. A verdict of murder against somebody unknown was returned at the inquiry . . . The other fellow—the ex-officer who was living with the wanted lady—was ‘killed by Sinn Feiners’ a few days later.” Bowen, his superior, and “the other fellow” were servants of a Government which was affirming, day in and day out, its resolve not to surrender to terrorism in Ireland.

The other side of the Irish story is a complement, and not a contrast. It is no insignificant testimonial to the efficiency of the Irish Republican Army that they murdered as ruthlessly as the police and Auxiliaries, and burned almost as frequently. There were, however, differences of method and policy. The R.I.C. and the “Tans” were, naturally, anxious that their killings should be ascribed in England to the “Shinners”, and, if it was impossible to do so—as when they shot prisoners without trial—it was announced that the victim was “shot while attempting to escape” (this formula was even applied to men securely lodged in the guard-room of Dublin Castle itself). On the other hand, it was obviously to the advantage of the Republicans to advertise its murders, for, as it could make no open parade of strength, it had to rely on a reputation for lethal ubiquity. I.R.A. operations were, mainly, of two kinds—ambushes and assassinations. The ambushes were

laid on country roads for small parties of troops and police, and the consequences of defeat for either side in these encounters were desperate; for the Irish, having no concentration camps or gaols, did not care to be embarrassed by prisoners; and the British were indisposed to extend the courtesies of regular warfare to an enemy not in uniform. The bloodiest of these scrambling, hole-and-corner battles was at Kilmichael, County Cork, in December, 1920, when only one of a party of eighteen Black and Tans was left alive, and it was evident that Auxiliaries had been butchered as they lay wounded. General Crozier went to Kilmichael in disguise to piece together a story that explained the thoroughness of the massacre. He learned that after several of the ambushed Auxiliaries had been killed and wounded the rest surrendered, but when the Republicans advanced to take their arms an Auxiliary shot a Republican dead. The Irishmen, "seeing red", killed all the police except one badly wounded man whom they thought was dead.

There was no possibility of extenuation, however, in many other cases of Republican savagery. Mrs. Lindsay, an elderly woman, who heard of an intended ambush and hurried to the nearest police station to give warning, was later caught by I.R.A. gunmen and put to death as an informer. By way of apology it was said that she would have been punished with imprisonment if there had been a Sinn Fein prison in existence. Another woman murdered was the young wife of District Inspector Blake, who was shot down at the same time as her husband, and a Captain Cornwallis, at a tennis party—a reprisal for the murder of Father Griffin. Major McKinnon, a police official, did not play tennis in time of war, he played golf; and he was murdered on the links. Assassination was not always summary. Major Compton-Smith, of the Royal Welsh Fusiliers, was kidnapped to be held as a hostage for

two Republican prisoners at Cork. Word was sent to the military commander of the martial law area that if the Republicans were executed Major Compton-Smith would also be executed. In all three cases sentences of death were carried out. There were stories of torture, generally as vague as war-time stories of German atrocities; one authenticated case was that of a Black and Tan at Tralee who was thrown into a boiler and boiled to death.

Dublin, unlike the West and South, was never under martial law—there was no war in Ireland. But it was in Dublin that the boldest, bloodiest and most effective of all the Irish massacres was carried out on Sunday, November 21, 1920. At nine o'clock that morning detachments of the Dublin Brigade of the I.R.A., varying in strength from ten to twenty men, visited eight hotels and houses at which British Secret Service, intelligence and court-martial officers were lodging. Within half an hour nine officers, two Secret Service men and two Auxiliaries were murdered, and four officers and one Secret Service man were wounded. In several cases the victims were killed as they lay in bed, others were dragged into bathrooms and shot. The wife of Captain Newbury helped him to hold their bedroom door, but the gunmen broke in and fired shot after shot into Newbury as he tried to clamber through the window. Another officer's wife, Mrs. Keenlyside, struggled with the raiders, and her husband escaped, wounded. The two Auxiliaries were running to Beggar's Bush Barracks with news of the murders when they were intercepted by a Sinn Fein picket, taken into a back garden and killed. The first warning was given at the barracks by a woman, a nurse, who risked her life in bringing the news from a house in Lower Mount Street where two officers were killed. But the raiding parties had dispersed, and only one of the gunmen was caught. Not until nearly an hour afterwards did the military command at

Dublin Castle know that there had been any shooting at all; it was too late for effective action, but orders were given for action that was bound to be ineffective, and that turned out to be disastrous. Troops, R.I.C., and two companies of Black and Tans were sent in the afternoon to surround Croke Park, where several thousand people were watching a hurley match; the spectators were to be ordered by megaphone to leave the ground by certain gates where they would be searched for arms. It was believed that a number of the murderers of the morning had been drafted into Dublin under cover of the hurley crowds, and it was naïvely assumed that the gunmen would keep their pistols in their pockets. But those who had arms dropped them on the ground before they reached the gates, and, in any case, the search was never carried out, for one of the parties of Black and Tans opened fire from their lorries into the crowd. Fourteen people, including women and children, were killed, and sixty were wounded before Major E. L. Mills, in command of the other Auxiliary company, managed to stop the shooting. Two or three days later Sir Hamar Greenwood, the Irish Secretary, defending the Crown forces in Parliament, said that in spite of the terrible provocation of the Sunday-morning massacre "not a single pane of glass had been broken" in Dublin by way of reprisal. After Major Mills had given evidence at the inquest on the Croke Park dead the jury returned a verdict of murder against the Auxiliaries. Both sides agreed to remember the day as Bloody Sunday. The bodies of nine of the murdered officers were brought to London, and the coffins, draped with Union Jacks, were escorted through the streets by four battalions of Guards and two regiments of Household Cavalry; Cabinet Ministers attended the memorial services in Westminster Abbey and Westminster Cathedral. In this war soldiers were not demobilized when they were dead. The nine red, white and blue coffins obliterated

the effect of one, draped in Sinn Fein green, white and yellow, which had advertised the Irish cause in London a month earlier.

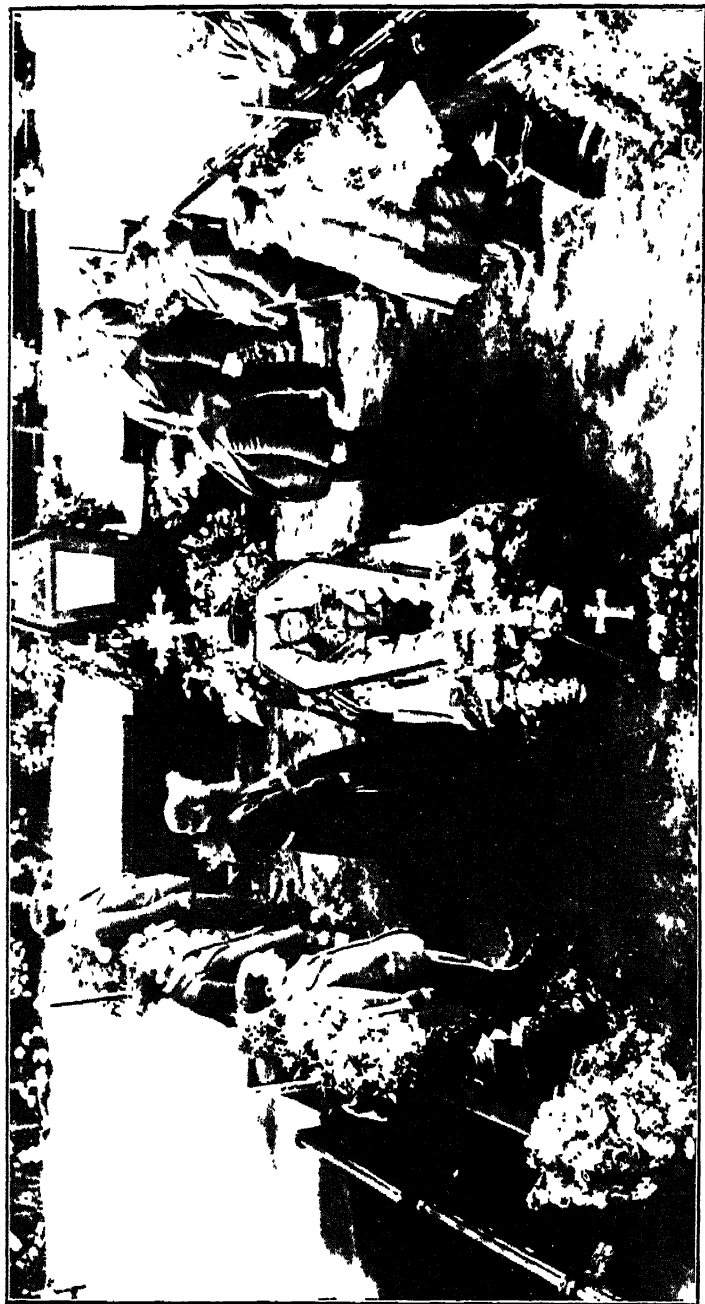
Terence MacSwiney's was a martyrdom in which the willingness of the spirit was hampered by the strength, not the weakness, of the flesh. The successor, as Lord Mayor of Cork, of the murdered Thomas McCurtain, he was court-martialled for conducting the affairs of the city in the name of the Irish Republic, and sent to England to serve a term of two years' imprisonment. Eleven other Republicans who were sentenced with him and imprisoned at Cork immediately went on hunger-strike, and as soon as Alderman MacSwiney arrived at Brixton Prison he followed their example. Within ten days he was reported to be seriously ill. Within a fortnight the prison had become a place of pilgrimage; crowds of two or three thousand assembled nightly under the walls, praying, shouting, singing. In the third week the crowd had grown to five thousand, and attempts were made to rush the gates; the Lord Mayor in his first-division cell heard the cries of "Up the rebels!" and the melancholy encouragement of the dirge-like "Soldiers' Song". But it was not only the Irish who protested. The English conception of Irish Republicans as traitorous murderers began to be shaken by the persistence of this Republican who was, calmly and loyally, killing only himself. The *Daily Mail* warned the Prime Minister that no Government could afford to stock its opponents' calendar of martyrs, and urged him not to allow the Lord Mayor's death to set up another barrier against Irish peace. In Parliament Liberal and Labour members demanded MacSwiney's release. Mr. Lloyd George refused. When the hunger strike had dragged out to twenty-four days, and the Lord Mayor was reported to be "dying fast", the Government felt it advisable to make an apologetic expansion of the refusal; Mr. Bonar Law ex-

plained that it would have been within the Government's rights, according to the practice of civilized nations, to have shot the Lord Mayor as an avowed rebel, but, in deference to humanitarian scruples, he was being allowed to die by inches instead of being killed outright.

Had the Lord Mayor died then the Irish Republic would have won a spectacular victory in the enemy's capital. But it is possible for martyrdom to be effective in inverse ratio to the duration of the martyr's agony. After fasting for fifty days Alderman MacSwiney was still able to talk and read—was even able, it was said, to shave himself. The thousands outside the prison dwindled to hundreds, to tens. In the newspapers generous sympathy with a hero degenerated into a vulgar pseudo-scientific curiosity as to limit of human capacity to live without food. Incredulity began to creep in. It was suggested that the prisoner was being nourished, without his knowledge, by some mysterious process. This was denied by prison officials. But on the sixtieth day of his strike the Lord Mayor was "brighter"—it seemed an affront to pity. The mortal implication of his long endurance had become almost completely obscured when on October 18 there came a sharp reminder from Cork Prison; Michael Fitzgerald, one of the eleven prisoners whose hunger-strike had begun two days before Alderman MacSwiney's, died. Still the Lord Mayor lived. October 25, the seventy-fourth day of his fast, was only a few hours old when, at last, he died, with the words, "I am dying a soldier of the Irish Republic" for valediction. Not since the Easter Week leaders of 1916 had any soldier of the Irish Republic died to such good purpose, but the full extent of the victory was not apparent that day. The authorities would not let MacSwiney's brother and the priest who had given him Extreme Unction leave the prison to spread the news of his death until police reinforcements had been sent for,

but so few people were waiting outside the gates that the precautions exceeded the emergency. Two days later, after an inquest at which the cause of death was horribly particularized as heart failure, dilated heart and acute delirium, following scurvy, due to exhaustion from prolonged refusal to take food, Terence MacSwiney's body was handed over to his family for burial.

A mile or so from Downing Street the soldier of the Irish Republic lay in state in St. George's Cathedral, Southwark, with the inscription on his coffin, "Murdered by the foreigner in Brixton Prison, London, England, on October 25th, 1920, the fourth year of the Republic", and all day mourners filed past to read the indictment. On October 29 the coffin, covered by the Sinn Fein flag, was borne in procession from the Cathedral through central London to Euston Station. Nothing in the bloody fantasy of the "troubles" touched a madder extreme of contradiction than this funeral march. As the procession formed outside St. George's a group of men wearing mackintosh trench coats took stations on either side of the hearse; then the trench coats were thrown off; the pall-bearers were wearing the green uniform of the Irish Republican Army. Led by Irish pipers in kilts of brown and green—the garb that Irishmen were once hanged for wearing—the cortège moved off, the escorting Metropolitan policemen marching in step with the green-coated soldiers of an Army then engaged in war against the King. A gruesome game of hide-and-seek was played with the corpse; while the mourners awaited its arrival at Kingstown, the Government diverted the steamer to Queenstown, fearing dangerous demonstrations in Dublin, and when the coffin at last reached Cork there was no one there to receive it. Incidentally, MacSwiney's martyrdom was not authorized by his leaders in Dublin, who were rather embarrassed by it. Mr. Pierce Beasley has explained that Collins and his



A SOLDIER OF THE IRISH REPUBLIC

The Lord Mayor of Cork, Terence MacSwiney, lying in state in St. George's Cathedral, Southwark

associates considered that by forcing the enemy to an extremity in which they could not consistently give way. MacSwiney had killed the effectiveness of the hunger-strike.

Having lost its Lord Mayor, Cork next lost its City Hall. In December a party of Auxiliaries was ambushed at Dillon's Cross. The same night British soldiers and Black and Tans burned down municipal and Government buildings and all the principal shops in Cork. Most of the buildings on one side of Patrick Street, the principal street in the city, were completely destroyed. British military officers pumped stolen petrol into the City Hall, fired Véry lights into the building to set it ablaze, and then cut the hoses of the fire-engines, but they generously gave the credit of the reprisal to the Black and Tans, whose Balmoral bonnets they had borrowed for the occasion. The Government offices were burned so that the Republicans might be incriminated—but even English Members of Parliament were not convinced that the people of Cork had set fire to their own city, particularly as the arson began after Curfew when only military and police patrols were in the streets. At first Sir Hamar Greenwood insisted that there was "no evidence that the fires were started by the Crown Forces", but under pressure, not only by the Liberal and Labour Opposition, but by Lord Hugh Cecil and other Conservatives, he had to admit the Government's responsibility for a few panes of glass. At the same time he explained the burning of the City Hall by saying that the flames had spread to it from Patrick Street—which would have meant that the fire had leaped quarter of a mile and crossed a river. Although the Government was asked for an inquiry by High Court Judges, the investigation was delegated to General Strickland, the officer commanding in the Cork area. This satisfied the soldiers, and nobody else; the police had so little confidence

in General Strickland's tribunal that they set up an inquiry of their own and made a separate report, unasked, to the Cabinet; the Irish ignored General Strickland; thus soldiers were tried by a soldier, and only soldiers gave evidence. Even so, the Strickland Report was such unsatisfactory propaganda for the British regime that the Government refused to publish it.

Meanwhile Home Rule had come into hypothetical being. Two days before Christmas, 1920, the Government of Ireland Act was placed on the Statute Book, the oddest piece of unwanted legislation ever misbegotten by Parliament; it gave Northern Ireland a separate legislature which it had not asked for and did not desire; and it withheld from the Southern Irish the satisfaction of racial vanity for which the Southern Irish had so vehemently asserted their willingness to kill and be killed. In one direction only did it serve a pacific purpose. It secured the Orange North against a settlement that would place it at the mercy of the Roman Catholic South, a possibility that had previously fixed Ulster against any settlement at all.

On the last day of 1920, a little more than a month after Dublin's Bloody Sunday, Mr. De Valera, President of the Irish Republic, returned from the United States, where he had been enlisting the support, in sympathy and dollars, of Irish-Americans; had quarrelled with Irish-American committees, and had, incidentally, stayed at the same hotel at the same time as the Prince of Wales. He immediately went into hiding, and Dublin Castle was at a great deal of pains to see that his privacy was not disturbed. Orders were given to Secret Service officers that they were not to employ any information they might obtain to secure the arrest of the President. While English newspaper readers were marvelling at the superhuman elusiveness of the Republican leader, English officers in Dublin were embarrassed by his obviousness—the difficulty was not to

see him. There was an annoying incident at Blackrock, near Dublin, in July, when a party of the Worcester Regiment raided houses in search of arms, and came upon a pale, pedagogic person in possession of a large number of incriminating documents. The prisoner spent a presumably anxious night in the guard-room of the nearest barracks, but the morning brought, not a firing-party, but an order from the civil power for immediate release. The President of the Irish Republic returned to State-aided seclusion, but he had to leave the Republican archives behind. These exposed the discomforts of a government "on the run"; the Minister of Finance complained that the Minister of Labour was never to be found in his office; the Minister of Labour wrote long minutes on every subject but those connected with his office—chiefly elaborate and impracticable schemes for propaganda abroad; the President devised formulæ asserting his absolute authority over the Cabinet and Parliament; Parliament was hampered by the necessity of meeting in relays—it was inexpedient to bring together more than fifty illegal legislators at a time; one document did credit to the statesman-like forethought of the President, when he criticized a project for persuading farmers to refuse payment of British income-tax. The original plan was, the farmers should burn all papers sent to them, but Mr. De Valera pointed out that it would be better that returns of income should be made, and that non-co-operation should be delayed until the time came for payment; this would keep the foreign bureaucracy uselessly busy, and the statements of income would form a basis for taxation when the Republic came into its own. Unfortunately the Republican Army had overlooked the approach of an Irish bureaucracy, and had already burned down the Dublin Customs House and all the Inland-Revenue records it contained.

It was said that the Germans abstained from bombing

the seats of high command on the Western Front on the principle that the survival of British generals improved Germany's prospects of victory; but this was not the principle on which the Irish President was left alone. While Mr. Lloyd George and his Irish Secretary still insisted that there could be no truce with murder, it was necessary to have somebody at liberty on the other side with whom a truce could be negotiated, it was a waste of time to lock up the rebel leader, since his release was bound to be the first condition of an armistice. With one ear opened to the instructions of Coalition Conservatives, implacably against concessions, and the other deafened by an increasing chorus of newspaper demands for a settlement, the Prime Minister waited. The Irish Republican Army was disintegrating; wherever martial law had been proclaimed—by January, 1921, the area included eight counties in the South and West—the troops were harrying the irregulars relentlessly, cutting off their supplies; the guerrillas were without money or ammunition and consequently very often without food. The peasants were tired of having their food commandeered, their cottages used as barracks and their barns as illicit arsenals, since, now there were so many troops and "Tans" about, they were as likely to be shot for helping the I.R.A. as for withholding help. On the other hand, the Irish Unionists in the South were tired of having their houses burned in reprisal for British reprisals, for where the troops burned down cottages worth a few hundred pounds the "Shinners" burned down mansions worth many thousands. The best of both worlds was becoming desperately close to the worst of both. But the Prime Minister waited, and in the first seven months of 1921 two hundred and forty-four police and ninety-four soldiers were killed, and four hundred and twenty-eight police and two hundred and ten soldiers were wounded.

In May, Sir James Craig, the Prime Minister of the newly constituted Government of Northern Ireland, had a secret conference with Mr. De Valera in Dublin; and in the same month the I.R.A. carried war across the Irish Channel to London and Liverpool. This expedition was, however, singularly ineffective; the father-in-law of a former R.I.C. man was shot in the stomach by masked raiders at Shepherd's Bush, and an elderly man and woman at Catford were also wounded, but in eight attempts at arson in one night only a few carpets and chairs were damaged: in one of the Liverpool raids a crippled ex-blue-jacket routed a party of gunmen by throwing a sewing-machine at them, and in another an Airedale terrier chased an I.R.A. detachment for nearly a quarter of a mile before it was shot down.

In June the King went to Belfast to open the new Northern Parliament; three of its members were absent from the ceremony—Eamonn de Valera, Arthur Griffith and Michael Collins. The King expressed hopes for the speedy return of peace to Ireland. Next day a train, in which men of the 10th Hussars, who had formed the Royal escort, were returning to barracks, was derailed, and four soldiers were killed. Lord Derby, who had been closely associated with Mr. Lloyd George in War Cabinets, paid a visit to Dublin as “Mr. Edwards”; when his identity was discovered he explained that he had merely been looking round to gratify a private curiosity, and was not believed. The imperturbable Mr. Cope, Assistant Under-Secretary at the Irish Office, had, from the beginning of the troubles, displayed the magnificent disregard of the permanent official for the puerilities of impermanent Cabinet Ministers, and no matter what the Prime Minister or the Irish Secretary told Parliament, kept in close personal touch with the Sinn Fein leaders. At the same time there was a price on the head of the most important Sinn Fein leader, Michael

Collins. England had heard a great deal about Michael Collins, but nothing about Mr. Cope, so that when the end came it was as perplexing and unexpected as every stage of the murderous muddle had been.

It came in June, immediately after the King's return from Belfast. Mr. Lloyd George wrote to "the chosen leader of the great majority in Southern Ireland", Mr. De Valera, and to Sir James Craig inviting them to a Conference in London. Safe conduct was offered to any colleague whom Mr. De Valera might choose to bring with him—murderers were not excluded. Sir James Craig accepted the invitation immediately, Mr. De Valera delayed until the middle of July. Meanwhile the I.R.A. continued to shoot and burn, the troops and Auxiliaries continued raids, and arrests, until on July 9 General Macready of the British Army met Commandant Barton and Commandant Duggan of the Irish Republican Army and negotiated a truce. These plain, blunt soldiers overlooked the detail of signing any document, and there was a good deal of squabbling later as to what the actual terms were. The war was over—and Mr. Patrick O'Keefe, a Sinn Fein deputy for Cork, told his constituents, "Practically alone, the County of Cork beat the British Army."

The war was over, and what followed—the negotiations in London, the Treaty, the struggle in Dail Eireann between Griffith and Collins, for ratification, and De Valera, against it, the revolt of the intransigent republicans under Rory O'Connor and the Englishman, Erskine Childers, the battle of the Four Courts, the assassination of Collins—belong to a separate history, that of the Irish Free State. To England the Irish troubles were coming to assume something of the remoteness of a Balkan imbroglio when, suddenly one sunny afternoon in June, 1922, they reimposed themselves on English attention. Field-Marshal Sir Henry Wilson, the former Chief of General Staff, whose

prestige as a soldier was then high among civilians and whose dexterity as a politician was admired by all soldiers, was murdered by Republican gunmen in broad daylight in Belgravia. Every circumstance that could heighten the outrageous incredibility of the crime was present—the dignified background of Eaton Place, the Field-Marshal's full uniform and medals (he had just returned from a war memorial ceremony at Liverpool Street Station), the ferocious recklessness of the murderers, and the courage of a miscellaneous crowd of Londoners who prevented the gunmen from escaping. Sir Henry had just dismissed a taxicab at a house in Eaton Place and was opening the door with his latchkey when two men, one tall and burly, the other a small man who limped, crossed the street towards him. They waited until his back was turned, and then one man drew a revolver and fired. At the sound of the shot the Field-Marshal's hand went to his sword, and, wheeling round, he ran down the steps to meet the attack. Before he could draw his sword he had been struck by six bullets, and he reached the pavement only to collapse in the gutter. By the time Lady Wilson, who had heard the shooting and rushed out of the house, reached his side, he was dead. The murderers moved away without undue haste—in Dublin they might have escaped, but London does not respect the privacy of revolver feuds. A street-cleaner began the chase, which was taken up by half a dozen policemen and scores of civilians. The gunmen fired again and again on their pursuers; they shot one policeman in the stomach, and another in the leg, and wounded a chauffeur who chased them in his car, but they were caught within quarter of a mile. Their trial for murder at the Old Bailey a month later was one of the shortest on record—the entire proceedings lasted only three hours—and they were hanged on August 10. The killing of Wilson was a reprisal. Sir Henry was a member of the Northern Irish Parliament,

and was held responsible for the stringency of measures in Ulster against Sinn Fein. His death was directly linked with the shooting of a Roman Catholic publican and his sons, who, it was asserted in Dublin, had been killed by the Ulster police. Sir Henry was the last casualty in England of Irish warfare.

The Irish struggle placed English intellectuals in a dilemma. The lingering tradition of nineteenth-century Liberalism was on the side of the Irish; if Freedom had shrieked when Kosciuszko fell she could hardly be altogether silent concerning Terence MacSwiney. But if libertarian sentiment was made uneasy, the disturbance never became a genuinely emotional response; there was nothing comparable to the enthusiasm of nineteenth-century poets for Greece, Hungary and Italy—not so much as one song before sunrise. This was not merely because De Valera lacked the picturesque personal qualities of Mazzini, or that Collins was a desperado too grimly efficient to evoke the sympathy that had been poured over Garibaldi. It was because even Liberals were beginning to doubt the sufficiency of nationalist idealism. Little nations might be—in the phrase of Mr. Lloyd George's sonorous nineteenth-century echo—divinely chosen vessels for particularly potent wines, but 1921 was the morning after a heavy night of that particular intoxication. The Versailles Treaty had provided an object lesson in the disadvantages of multiplying frontiers, for the dismembering of the Austrian Empire had merely substituted for one central tyranny, more or less amenable to European opinion, half a dozen other tyrannies completely impervious to civilized influences. Certainly the Irish showed a lack of historical tact—a deficiency of time-sense—in not staging their revolution half a century earlier.

CHAPTER V

SPORT AND SPECTACLE

Galen commends . . . to play at ball, be it with the hand or racket, in tennis-courts or otherwise, because it exerciseth each part of the body, and doth much good, so that they sweat not too much.

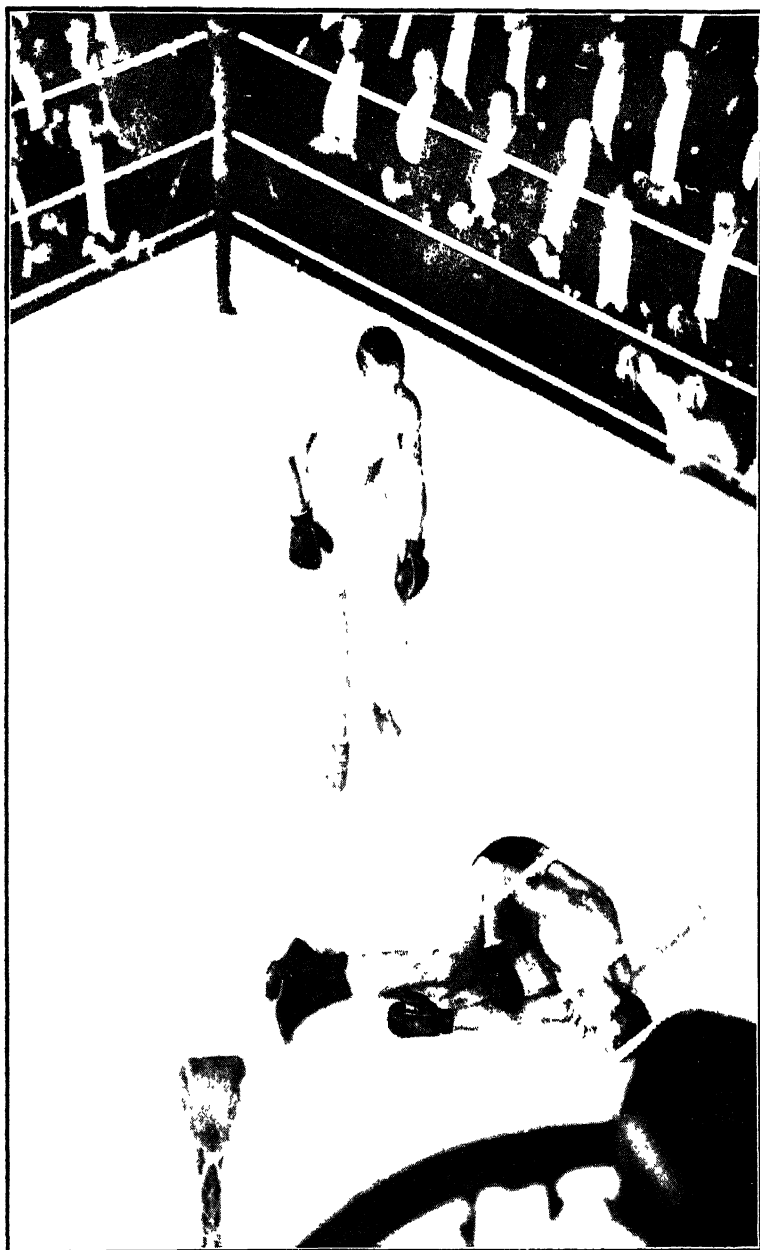
—ROBERT BURTON.

Post-War Playtime—Suzanne Arrives—Machines-for-Sport—Victorious Invaders—The Cup Final Fiasco—Sport-Watching Multitudes—The Electric Hare—Betting and Beauty—Dirt-Track Racing.

“THERE has never been such fame as his,” says Mr. Bernard Darwin, recalling the Victorian hero-worship of W. G. Grace. It is a useful reminder that homage to eminent athletes is not, in England, a post-War, or even a twentieth-century, development. No boxer, not even Carpentier at the height of his post-War celebrity, enjoyed more attention than Carpentier did in the year immediately preceding the War, and no prize-fight since has been more excitedly discussed than the Frenchman’s match in London in the early summer of 1914 with the American, Gunboat Smith. Nevertheless, sport became in the nineteen-twenties a far more important element in daily life than it had ever been, for if the occasional intensity of interest in sporting heroes is no greater than formerly, the extent and continuity of interest is unprecedented. The games-mania of Imperial Rome was, by comparison, a parochial excitement, lacking newspapers, broadcasting stations, and cinemas to spread the fame of champions across a world many times larger than the Romans knew.

Except the Romans, no people has ever had so much playtime as the citizens of the modern mechanical civilization. Thanks to Mr. Willett and the War, Britons found themselves in command of an hour's extra daylight leisure every day of spring and summer—a week's holiday in the year. And thanks to machinery, hundreds of thousands of workers found themselves at the end of the day in command of surplus energy to match extended leisure. Thanks to other machinery—buses, trams, motor-coaches, cheap cars and motor-cycles in ever-increasing numbers—the playground was made as spacious as the playtime was ample. It was an obvious and enormous advance to the millennium of "the greatest happiness of the greatest number", the goal of those nineteenth-century English Liberal philosophers whom Spengler impolitely describes as "progress-philistines". Their twentieth-century heir, Mr. H. G. Wells, was tremendously encouraged by the spectacle; "it is only with the coming of power machinery and large industry that the work of the common human being begins to be limited to regular hours leaving a daily margin of daylight and activity. . . . It is quite a delusion to think that the past was a leisurely time and that this is a driving time. The past was a time of almost universal drudgery and insufficiency, and the ages of leisure and plenty lie ahead." If Herr Spengler, glowering over the Stadium fence, grumbles, "Of the soul, not one word," that is not likely to disturb the "fans"—or to worry Mr. Wells, either. They know that it is the job of "science" to get as much work as possible done by machines, so that man may have as little to do as possible.

But it was not only the labour-saving machine that gave sport a new importance. There were also the machines of publicity, the camera, the rotary press, the microphone. Once upon a time the newspapers had thought the Wimbledon tennis tournament adequately covered by a dozen lines



THE BIG FIGHT BOOM

Bombardier Wells knocked out in the first round by Georges Carpentier

of small print in an inconspicuous corner of a back page: only two hundred people saw Spencer Gore beat W. Marshall in the final of the first men's singles championship at the All-England Croquet and Lawn Tennis Club in 1876; but long before the War Wimbledon had become "news", and a Surrey garden party had grown up into an international event. Young men came from Australia and New Zealand to end the supremacy of the English and Irish champions, America challenged and, in the person of McLoughlin, came within a set or two of success; a Californian girl won the women's championship; French and German names—Gobert, Decugis, Kleinschroth—were becoming familiar to a few thousand enthusiasts. But the attention of the millions was not engaged until after the Armistice.

When Suzanne Lenglen arrived at Wimbledon in 1919 she was twenty years old, but already a veteran, for she had won her first world's championship—on hard courts in Paris—two months before the War broke out. Ten thousand people watched her defeat Mrs. Lambert Chambers in the final of the ladies' singles, and for twenty times that number a new enthusiasm had come into being. Tennis was already news, but Mlle Lenglen made it, for a full fortnight of every year, the most important news of the day. There had been a victory march of London troops on the morning of that final, and the King and Queen, having watched that valedictory parade pass Buckingham Palace, had motored to Wimbledon to witness the arrival of an archetypal figure of the Peace. In one respect it was not the characteristic Suzanne who faced Mrs. Lambert Chambers; she wore a white hat, instead of the coloured *bandeau* which was to become part of the uniform of every "tennis girl" in every suburban club. But her significance as "the author of a revolution in the physical development of her sex" was immediately obvious; in the words of Mr. Wallis Myers,

she had suddenly "lifted lawn tennis from the level of a pastime for women, whose movements were restricted by a convention of dress and decorum, and raised it to an acrobatic art, claiming the freedom of the limbs, and converting the stylist into a spectacular artist". Essentially, indeed, a spectacular artist and the newspapers perceived that the spectacle could be extended beyond the time and place of the tennis-match. Suzanne added "sex appeal" to sport and made it possible to bring lawn tennis on to the news pages without fear of boring women readers, for even people who had never touched a racket could be persuaded that Mlle Lenglen's temperament was as dramatic as her tennis, and most women—who had not yet discovered the difference between a lob and a half-volley—were eager to read descriptions of the champion's dresses. "As women's play began to focus as much attention as men's," says Mr. Myers, "the anticipatory question round the stands was not 'How will she play?' but 'What will she wear?'" The picture-papers made Suzanne's features as readily identifiable as those of the Prime Minister; she leaped, ballerina-like, in white silhouette, across the pages of a thousand issues of the *Daily Sketch* and the *Daily Mirror*. Until Suzanne arrived Mrs. Lambert Chambers had not been defeated at Wimbledon for eleven years, and had been seven times woman champion—it did not matter, for only tennis enthusiasts knew her by sight, and only her friends knew her Christian name; but everybody knew Suzanne, as later everybody was to know Helen, and Betty, and Eileen.

There was a sense in which the new sport-hero or sport-heroine was a labour-saving machine, a highly specialized engine designed to do consummately what the spectator would have liked to be able to do, and in certain outstanding cases the machines-for-sport seemed to have been put together with as much cold calculation as is applied to the "assembling" of a motor-car. Suzanne Lenglen was not

born for the Centre Court: "I was a pale, thin little person," she told an interviewer, "and father and mother were afraid I should always be an invalid." "Father", who had been a champion cyclist, was the engineer who converted this unpromising material into an almost infallible mechanism for winning tennis matches; the child was drilled, with inexorable patience, to place a ball in any given square of a specially marked court, and the defective physical engine was tuned up by Swedish exercises to the maximum pitch of efficiency. "Tennis", said Suzanne, "transformed me magically into a nut-brown maid, sparkling with health," but the suggestion of young and wilful exuberance is strangely inappropriate. So little spontaneity was there that the match-winning machine was liable to break down in the absence of the expert who had made it. M. Lenglen allowed his daughter to go to America without him, and Suzanne collapsed in her first encounter with Mrs. Mallory, the American champion. The importance of M. Lenglen's presence on the edge of the court became so obvious that a fantastic rumour was spread that Suzanne actually played in a hypnotic trance—a Trilby to her father's Svengali. This legend assisted the belief that the sport-heroine was not quite so mechanical after all.

For nobody wanted to believe in the mechanization of sport. The champions wanted to be personalities, and the fans were eager to accept them at that valuation. Here nicknames were useful—"Big Bill", "Little Poker Face", "Bunny", "the Bounding Basque"—or, failing a nickname, the conventional familiarity of Christian names served. A young man from Wolverhampton named Tom Webster became, at a bound, one of the most popular and most highly paid humorous draughtsmen in the country by emphasizing the all-too-human idiosyncrasies of the stars, and his caricatures made national celebrities of men and women whose achievements depended upon specialization

of the narrowest kind. Another disguise, so far as lawn tennis was concerned, was the insistence upon amateur status—a nominal disinterestedness. Nominal, because it was so strongly suspected that many supposed dilettanti made a comfortable living from “expenses” and other perquisites of prowess that a new word, “shamateur”, was coined to describe them. Mlle Lenglen was, incidentally, a prosperous journalist, and had the candour, eventually, to become a professional player: there was more candour than calculation in the experiment, for the crowds that flocked to see the games-player were not attracted by the hired performer. The “spectacular artist” could not afford to be merely spectacular, she had also to assume the detachment proper to the artist. The necessity for this compromise has produced a curious procession of young women who combine the exhibitionist aplomb of the film star and a rather haggard girlishness appropriate to amateur status.

Exactly how much of the post-War demand for, and consequent supply of, “sports girls” was due to purely visual stimulation it is impossible to compute, but it is certain that the appeal to the eye was a very important factor. Running girls, rowing girls, tennis girls, river girls (posed against “futurist” cushions in punts), camping girls, bathing girls, were obvious targets for the Press photographer. “Here,” said the picture-pages a dozen times a day, and every day including Sundays, “here are your typical modern girls”—and modern girls, envying the free-limbed grace of the runners, volleyers and divers, set about becoming typical, too. There is a certain point in the fact that a determined attempt to popularize football for women, supported by the visit of a female team from France, was a complete failure; it is impossible to make attractive pictures of heavily booted women with legs deformed by shinguards. If it had not been for the accident that the camera is most effective in daylight and out-of-doors, the

billiards girl or the crochet girl might have been imposed on the world as a typically modern example.

The All-England tennis championships increased in spectacular attraction, while all England had to become used to being mere spectators of its decisive stages. In 1919 ten years had passed since an Englishman had held the championship, but the successful invaders had at least been overseas Britons. In the following year the American Tilden—with a four-leafed clover plucked from Lincoln's garden in his pocket—took the title for the first time outside the British Empire, and it has never since returned. The first five years of the decade brought the British athlete to his lowest depths of prestige. The coal-miner from Lens, Georges Carpentier, defeated British boxers with contemptuous ease. In the early years of the decade the main pillar of the English ring was a fragile little man from a South Wales colliery village—the "Mighty Atom," Jimmy Wilde, who defeated Americans in utter disregard of prevailing fashion, till Time and the New York boxer, Pete Herman, removed even this support. Tilden and the Frenchmen, Cochet, Borotra and Lacoste, made the tennis championship a private quarrel at which the natives could only stand and stare; and except for Miss McKane's success in 1924—when Mlle Lenglen had withdrawn owing to illness—the women's championships also went abroad. The cricket record was equally humiliating, for England played thirteen Test Matches against Australia before winning one. In 1921 Jock Hutchison came from Chicago to win the Open Golf Championship for the United States for the first time, since when an Englishman has intruded only once in the list of English champions. The Derby winner, Papyrus, was shipped across the Atlantic to be thoroughly beaten by the American horse, Zev. The only Boat Race won by Oxford since the War was in 1923, when her stroke was a B.N.C. under-

graduate from Concord, Massachusetts, named W. P. Mellen. Rugby fifteens from New Zealand, New South Wales and South Africa, a hockey team from India, polo players from America, Channel swimmers from Egypt, Argentina, Germany, and the United States, boxers from France and Italy, all contributed to making English interest in international sport a masochistic indulgence.

The trouble, it seemed, was that the English could not be persuaded to take their pleasures seriously. They insisted, even those who lived by playing games, on playing them instead of working at them. An Englishman, Archie Compston, defeated the American, Walter Hagen, by the greatest margin on record in first-class golf—eighteen up and seventeen to play in a seventy-two-hole match—in April, 1928, but Hagen went straight from his defeat at Moor Park to win the Open Championship; that was what he had crossed the Atlantic for, and he could not afford to make any mistakes about it. For Hagen was reputed to spend in entertaining alone as much money—£2,400—in one year as a successful British professional could hope to earn in the same space of time. One was a strolling player, the other—with his four motor-cars, his £100 a week hotel bills, his forty golfing suits—was an industrial magnate. Another American visitor, Mr. "Bobby" Jones, gave a new and surprising significance to amateur status; he was credited with an income of £40,000 a year from the by-products of the championships he won in England and the United States. It was much and inconclusively debated whether Jones or Harry Vardon was the greatest golfer in history, but no chartered accountant would have hesitated over the answer, for Vardon had made the mistake of exercising his virtuosity in the wrong decade and the wrong continent for an absurd fraction of the reward earned by an amateur.

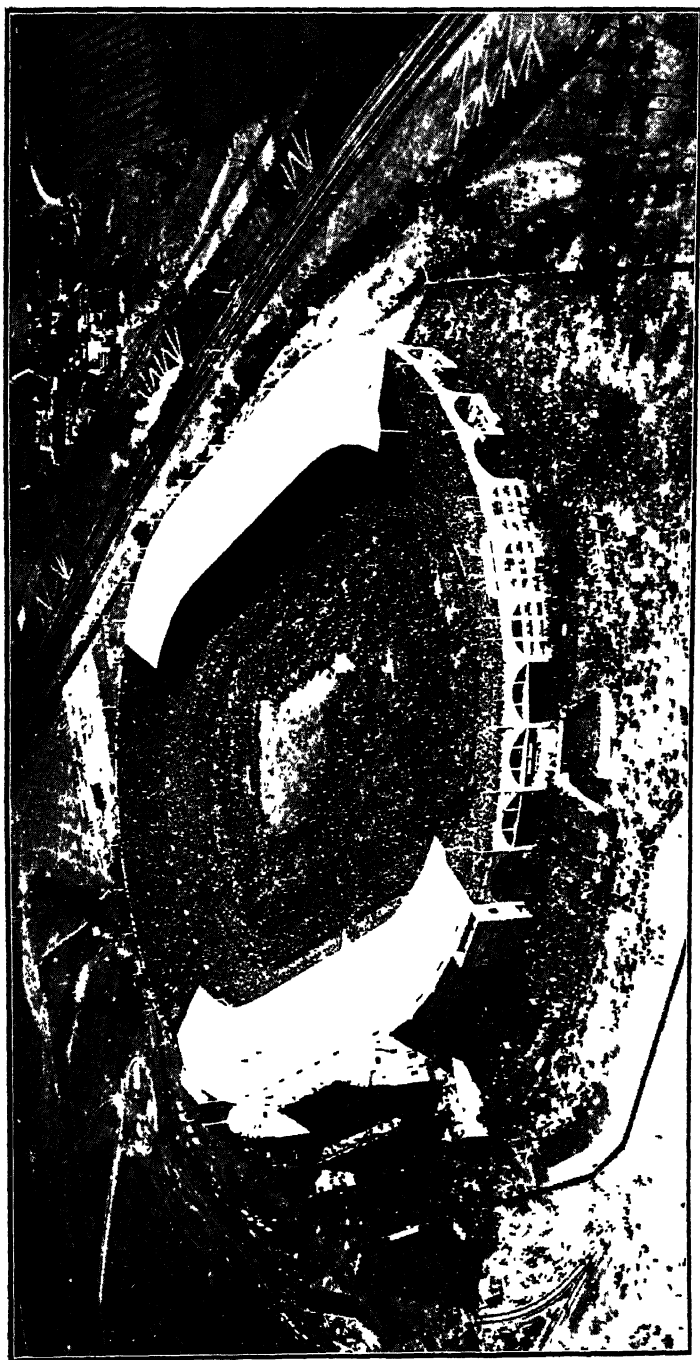
Besides introducing the amateur as a very highly paid

athlete, Jones's first victory in the Open Championship marked a stage in the post-War recognition of sport as a money-making spectacle, for it was in that year, 1926, that onlookers were first charged for the privilege of following the competitors round the course, and in three days twelve thousand people paid to see the play. There is nothing startling about the number—in the same year as many people were shut out of Lord's on the opening day of the second Test Match, and as many people were able to—and did—crowd into the stands round the Centre Court of Wimbledon to watch the championship final. The story of sport throughout the decade is very largely the story of larger and ever larger hordes of spectators. Wimbledon was enlarged in 1922, in 1923 the Wembley Stadium was made available for football crowds, the Twickenham Rugby ground was rebuilt in 1924. It seemed impossible to build arenas large enough to hold all those who wanted to watch sport-spectacles. When the first Football Cup Final was held at the Stadium in April, 1923, quarter of a million people were estimated to have set out for Wembley, and about 160,000 forced their way into an arena of which the maximum capacity was 125,000. The weight of numbers broke down the barriers three-quarters of an hour before the game was due to begin, and the three thousand policemen were helpless. The still advancing mob was held up by stopping all traffic bound for Wembley, but when the King arrived there were fifteen or twenty thousand people struggling to get into the Stadium, and it took the King's car ten minutes to travel the last few hundred yards to the entrance. Within the arena the football pitch was invisible; it was hidden by fifty thousand "fans" who had been forced out of the stands by the crowd pouring through the broken barriers. It seemed impossible that the match could be played, but fourteen mounted policemen—tardy reinforcements—saved the day. The fourteen pushed and

persuaded the fifty thousand to clear the pitch, and the game began, three-quarters of an hour late. The spectators were packed twelve deep on the field, right up to the touch-line, and midway through the match there was an interruption of more than ten minutes because the crowd again encroached on the pitch. During the initial stampede hundreds of men and women were knocked down and trampled by their helplessly driven fellows. The ambulance detachments attended to one thousand casualties, when they could reach them—the case of a man with a broken shoulder-blade who had to wait two hours for attention was not exceptional—and sixty cases of serious injury were admitted to hospitals.

In the following year, it was reported, a million people applied for tickets to see the Cup Final.

But the greatest sport-watching multitudes—those that swarmed on Epsom Downs to see the Derby, or lined the Thames banks on Boat Race Day—passed through no turnstiles and defied exact computation. And, singularly enough, some of the greatest post-War triumphs of British nerve and sinew were achieved out of range of British eyes. It was on a Florida beach that Captain Malcolm Campbell drove his way through all motor speed records at a rate of 206 miles an hour, and when the American, Ray Keech, outstripped Campbell by a mile an hour it was again in Florida that Major Segrave reclaimed the record at 231 miles an hour. Sir Henry Segrave had been dead a year—lost in the wreck on Lake Windermere of the motor-boat in which he was seeking the sovereignty of another element—when Sir Malcolm Campbell went back to Daytona to raise the record to 245 miles an hour. On foreign waters Mr. Kaye Don first made the motor-boat record British, and a foreign shore saw the beginnings of British speed supremacy in the air. On September 26, 1927, at Venice, Flight-Lieutenant S. N. Webster flew



THE CUP FINAL FIASCO

The crowd on the football pitch when the game was due to begin at Wembley Stadium, April 28, 1923

at 281 miles an hour to win the Schneider Trophy from Italy.

In these adventures the new importance of the machine in sport was made most obvious. The man and the machine—Segrave and his Golden Arrow, Campbell and his Blue Bird, Flight-Lieutenant G. H. Stainforth and the Supermarine Rolls Royce in which he set up the air record of 407 miles an hour—were almost mystically identified; but was the machine an extension of human will, or had the man become a component of the machine?

The lordship of the machine was patent in a new diversion which arrived, or returned, from America in 1926. The first experiment in greyhound racing had been made forty years earlier, in a field at Hendon, when the dogs were persuaded to chase a stuffed hare drawn by a cord attached to a hand windlass. But a greyhound at speed covers forty miles an hour, and no human arm could wind up the cord fast enough to keep the hare ahead of the dogs; so the experiment was abandoned. A more efficient machine was needed, and was eventually supplied by electricity, which could send the hare hurtling round a track at sixty miles an hour, and the Hendon experiment was successfully resumed in Oklahoma in 1923. In the summer of 1926 the "electric hare" was introduced to England, when a track was opened in Manchester. On the opening night, July 17, there were about a thousand spectators, but within a month or two the nightly attendances had grown to seventeen thousand. London had to wait until the following June for the new excitement, but the Manchester enterprise had been well advertised and the promoters found a ready-made public. Greyhound racing became a craze overnight. In a four months' season in 1927 more than five and a half million people paid for admission to the National Greyhound Racing Club's tracks—and the tracks which were not under the

club's control were equally popular. A craze—it would collapse as soon as the novelty had faded, it was said. In the following season the N.G.R.C. attendances rose to thirteen and a half million, and in 1929 exceeded sixteen million. In the second season at the White City ground there were as many bookmakers standing as there had been spectators at the first Manchester meeting.

It was not only on the tracks that easy money was to be made out of "the dogs", for the gambling in greyhound company shares was as feverish as the gambling at the races. When the Wembley Stadium track was promoted the shilling shares leaped immediately to ten shillings and sixpence.

"The dogs" transformed the leisure of several million people. When the sport was a year old Brigadier-General Critchley claimed that "statistics showed definitely that about one per cent. of the population went to greyhound racing". An inquiry by the *Daily Telegraph* into the effect upon trade and competing forms of entertainment indicated that the sport was as popular with women as with men, and that cinemas, dance halls and billiard saloons were losing money on nights when the electric hare was running. What attracted the crowds? There were various answers—many hostile. The proprietors of cinemas, dance halls and billiard saloons were suddenly persuaded of the hideous evil of betting, and found themselves, for once, in alliance with clergymen and magistrates. The people who had invested money in greyhound shares indignantly denied that betting was more than a minor incident; just as it has been attested, on the authority of scores of bookmakers, that horse-racing has no other object than the welfare of the English thoroughbred, so the supporters of greyhound racing protested against the wilful misunderstanding of their mission as social reformers. "If greyhound racing reduces drinking and drunkenness," said General Critchley,

"if it gets people out into the open air, if it stops street betting, and, above all, if it gives the working man something to talk about and think about, some little wholesome amusement after his day's work is done, then I maintain that greyhound racing is a benefit to the community." As to the General's first claim, the *Daily Telegraph* reported that public-houses near the tracks had to increase their staffs and stocks for racing nights, and even so were unable to cope with the demand, and that many thirsty sportsmen who were crowded out of the bars bought bottles of beer in off-licence houses and drank in the streets. It is hardly necessary to comment on the suggestion—which had not a shadow of confirmation—that "the dogs" did anything to stop street betting, for if gambling is an evil it is not conspicuously alleviated by inviting the working man to an enclosure where several hundred bookmakers are habitually assembled. General Critchley did, indeed, quote further "statistics" to show that only one visitor in four "got a chance to bet", but he did not explain what mysterious power deprived the other three of the chance. The last word of this remarkable defence was a claim to æsthetic justification—"anyone who says that greyhound racing depends upon betting has no idea of the beauty of the scene". Evidently the Stock Exchange had no idea of the beauty of the scene, for a threat by the Home Secretary to stop betting on the tracks brought the prices of greyhound shares rattling down.

The threat was never fulfilled. The Home Secretary disapproved of bookmakers, but he detested Bolsheviks. The greyhound boom came in the year after the General Strike, and it gave the working man something to talk about and think about—something that might not do him any particular good, but was not likely to do a Conservative Government any harm.

Still, the claim for the beauty of the scene was not

complete nonsense. By concentration, in space and time, of the spectator's interest, greyhound racing achieved a hypnotic, if not an æsthetic, intensity, with its floodlit track ringed by expectant darkness, its brief, sharp contests (a race lasts about thirty seconds, and in a night's programme of nearly two hours fewer than four minutes are taken up by the actual running of the dogs).

Further proof that sheer excitement of spectacle, without the stimulus of gambling, could be made to draw crowds was afforded by another imported sport—dirt-track racing. Once a year increasing thousands of people had gone to the Isle of Man to watch the motor-cycle races for the Tourist Trophies, in which young men hurtled round the island, projecting themselves down hills at speeds above a hundred miles an hour, leaping in great arcs over hump-backed bridges, swinging round corners with machines canted over at fantastic angles: but road racing was forbidden on the mainland, and racing on an enclosed track was too easy to be interesting. Australians and Americans discovered, however, that on a cinder track a motor-cycle, though it lost half its speed, could be made to behave so exuberantly that people would pay to look at it. As soon as the "speedway" was introduced to this country Britons showed unmistakably their willingness to pay for the new spectacle, and within a season the sport had developed its own ritual, with "leagues", Test Matches, and "stars". The emergence into celebrity of picturesquely nicknamed "Tigers" and "Blueys" was another proof that, however essential might be the dependence of some forms of post-War sport upon machinery, the onlooker found his excitement in emphasising the human element.

Happily there were pastimes that defied mechanization. The affectionate applause that saluted every stage of the wonderful year of the forty-two-years-old Jack Hobbs—the cricket season of 1925, when the Surrey batsman

played sixteen three-figure innings and passed "W.G.'s" record by scoring his one hundred and twenty-seventh century in first-class cricket—the eagerness with which his dazzling progress was followed, was evidence that there was still a power mightier than the machine. As much attention was bestowed five years later on a young visitor from New South Wales. Donald George Bradman was twenty-two years old when he played his first innings on an English wicket, but he already held the record for the highest individual score ever made by any batsman in first-class cricket—452 not out for New South Wales against Queensland. He was expected to astonish, and nobody could complain that he fell short of expectation. In the first match of the Australians' tour he batted against Worcester for four and a half hours to score 236 out of 492, and in the following week, against Leicester, he made 185 not out; a score of 252 not out at the Oval and one of 191 against Hampshire helped towards a total of one thousand runs before the end of May. Cricket-lovers gasped when in the first innings of his first Test Match in England, Bradman was bowled by Tate for eight, but in the second innings he atoned with 131; in the second Test the order of "sensations" was reversed, with 254 in the first innings and one run in the second; and the third Test was made memorable by the young Australian's achievement of the highest score ever made in Test cricket—334 runs. As extraordinary, though by no means as exhilarating, was his performance in the fifth Test, at the Oval. Including a day when rain stopped play, the match lasted six days and was the longest in the history of Test cricket. Bradman went in on Monday afternoon and stayed at the wicket until Wednesday, when he was caught by Duckworth, off Larwood's bowling, for 232. In twenty-nine matches in the Australians' tour Bradman scored 3,170 runs, and had ten three-figure innings.

Just as in the service of mechanical speed British prowess was more lavishly displayed abroad than at home, so, in the most primitive form of speed, British prestige was upheld on foreign running-tracks, mainly by three young men from Cambridge. At the Paris Olympic Games in 1924, H. M. Abrahams won the 100 metres sprint in $10\frac{3}{4}$ seconds—one-fifth of a second better than the American Paddock's time at the previous Olympic series. At Paris, too, there was D. G. A. Lowe to gain for Britain the 800 metres; he repeated his victory four years later at the Amsterdam games, improving his time by nearly a second to 1 minute $51\frac{1}{2}$ seconds. Britain, represented by Lord Burghley, also won the 400 metres at Amsterdam. It was a sorely-needed consolation for "horizontal heavyweights".

CHAPTER VI

GOOD-BYE TO WAR

Where are the eagles and the trumpets?

—T. S. ELIOT.

The Coalition in *Extremis*—Mr. Baldwin and His Pipe—"Tranquillity"—Paying America—A £125,000 Sacrifice—"It will have to be Baldwin"—War on Heaven—The Tariff Blunder—The First Labour Government—Mr. MacDonald's Motor-car—The Zinoviev Letter—Back to Tranquillity.

IT is simple enough to determine, to the nearest minute or so, the time at which a man dies; not so simple to fix the exact moment in the last illness at which the principle of dissolution overcomes the principle of life, and the sick man is transformed, irrevocably, into a dying man. This applies, too, to the pathology of the body politic. At some hour in the years between the Armistice and the fall of the Coalition, Mr. Lloyd George ceased to be the man of the hour. Why? may be answered more satisfactorily than When?

The Coalition had passed the mortal crisis, it was dying before many of those in daily association with the patient knew that it was sick. Only a few months before Mr. Lloyd George lost his power, his party and his prestige, a Coalition propagandist, Mr. O. F. Maclagan, issued a pamphlet which stated, with striking lucidity and force, what the position of the Government was not. If the sense of every statement is reversed, it is impossible to improve on his account.

"The Coalition has come to stay," he wrote. "This idea may shock some old-fashioned politicians who have

not realized either the general trend of political development or the tremendous possibilities inherent in Government by Coalition, but it is rapidly winning popular support. . . . Mr. Lloyd George has always stood for justice, and has never hesitated to imperil his popularity by saying outright what he conceives to be the right thing. . . . As a leader of the Coalition he has been eminently successful, and, assisted by loyal colleagues, has proved himself to be more than worthy of the great trust reposed in him."

Interpreting Mr. MacLagan, we arrive at the facts of 1922—that the Coalition had not come to stay, that it was rapidly losing popular support and that Mr. Lloyd George was not assisted by loyal colleagues.

To one important colleague, Sir George Younger, the most interesting result of the "coupon" Election of 1918 was that the bulk of the Coalition majority was Conservative. It was only reasonable, in Sir George's eyes, that the Coalition policy should be predominantly Conservative, and on those terms he was prepared to swallow his personal antipathy to the Prime Minister. Dread of revolution kept the Conservative Right Wing attached to, rather than incorporated with, the Coalition, and as fear of revolution waned, the Diehards' dislike of the Premier grew. The collapse of the Triple Alliance had been a costly success for Mr. Lloyd George. With the threat of militant labour disposed of, there was very little left to keep the Coalition together. A certain cohesion was supplied by the block of coupon candidates—"hard-faced men who had done well out of the War"—who realized that their constituencies were unlikely to make the same mistake twice; they kept Mr. Lloyd George in his seat, not from loyalty, but in order to keep their own seats.

As for popular support, only an electorate of chameleons

could have been consistent in supporting Mr. Lloyd George. Those who had not been shocked by the Irish war were disgusted by the Irish peace. Half the country had been alienated by the harshness of the opposition to the miners, and the other half alarmed by the trade negotiations with the Bolsheviks. The Prime Minister had failed to "make Germany pay", but he was making Britain pay. Taxation was still so heavy that Lord Rothermere's Anti-Waste League, with no policy but a bellow of "Squandermania!" was able to win by-elections at Dover and Westminster. Trade had slumped, the "homes for heroes" were still unbuilt, the War-winning legend had been riddled by the public squabbling of the generals, nothing but disillusion had come of the League of Nations.

And, finally and fatally, there was the revolt against the War—an immense weariness and distrust of War emotions, War aspirations, War clichés, of everything that recalled the struggle and the disappointment. "Push and go" had done its worst—very well, muddling through could not do worse, and would, at least, be more restful. Bigness—the "Big Four" of Versailles, for example—had become a burden. Brilliance was a Jack-o'-Lantern. Dullness and nonentity would not make so many unredeemable promises. Experts?—efficiency? . . . From fatigue and bewilderment a new fatalism had been born, a paralysing suspicion that the world's destiny had escaped for ever from man's control, that causes had become too obscure and effects too complex for any human understanding. If that were so, the expert was no more efficient than the amateur. After the Coalition fell Lord Birkenhead sneered at its successor as "a Cabinet of second-rate brains", and did not realize that he had defined its strength. Even if the supermen had succeeded, they would have been overwhelmed in the end by the accumulated resentment of the humble. It was precisely because Mr. Lloyd George had been so

completely the man of 1919 that he could not be the man of 1922.

But the man of the second post-War phase, the figure in which its tendencies were expressed, its aspirations fulfilled and its fears rationalized, was not found immediately.

While the Coalition was still lying in its last swoon, but before the danger of its dissolution was apparent, Mr. Lloyd George flirted with Lord Birkenhead's idea of a "National" or "Centre" party. This was after the departure of Mr. Barnes and Mr. Roberts from the Ministry finally disposed of the fiction, hitherto sedulously fostered, of Labour co-operation. A meeting of Liberal Ministers was held to consider the suggestion of organic union with the Conservatives, but it came to nothing. Mr. Lloyd George urged the need of "closer co-operation" in the constituencies, but he jibbed at the idea of fusion. That would have meant becoming a Conservative leader; the path of retreat to Limehouse would have been cut off forever—and who could say when it might be needed? The Prime Minister was still nominally a Liberal. As a Liberal he had formerly stolen Labour's thunder. He might one day steal the very Labour Party itself—right under Mr. Ramsay MacDonald's nose!

In this muddle of issues and possibilities the Coalition approached its end. Mr. Maclagan and his like trumpeted their ingenuous praise of that statesman "of exceptional calibre", their leader, who was as masterfully busy as ever at Cannes and Genoa: and Sir George Younger sharpened his daggers and awaited his opportunity. It came when the Prime Minister, having backed the loser of the Græco-Turkish War, persisted in his misjudgment by ordering a demonstration in force against the victorious Turks at Chanak. The Conservatives, in open rebellion at last, met at the Carlton Club, on October 20, 1922, and by 187 votes to 87 decided to withdraw their support from

the Coalition. Within three hours Mr. Lloyd George had resigned.

By any reckoning the Carlton Club meeting was significant. Its immediately obvious importance was in ending a six years' Premiership that had been virtually a dictatorship, and in abruptly reducing "the most powerful statesman in Europe" to almost complete impotence. And—though the importance of this was not immediately obvious—it brought into political prominence for the first time Mr. Stanley Baldwin.

Only clairvoyant intuition could have recognized Mr. Baldwin as a man of destiny. Indeed, he had so little to distinguish him, in physical or mental features, from the rank and file of Conservative members that the public was hard put to it to identify him when his leadership made some sort of identification necessary. If it had not been for his habit of smoking a pipe hardly anybody would have been able to keep in mind who he was. The pipe was invaluable. Its projection provided the only abruptness of contour in the square, smooth figure, and the cartoonists were duly thankful for this small mercy. It typified Mr. Baldwin's spiritual kinship with the millions of steady, slow-but-sure, house-holding, tax-paying, bread-winning, pipe-smoking, proudly ordinary English voters. It was as comfortingly unpretentious as, for example, the arrogant jut of Lord Birkenhead's cigar was adventurous and provocative.

Mr. Baldwin lived up to his pipe so conscientiously that it was long before even his opponents perceived that this deliberately plain man had a good deal of paradox in his history and character. He accepted preferment under protest, and the protest was patently sincere. His son, Oliver, has told how he and his sisters decided to settle a nursery quarrel about Cavaliers and Roundheads by asking their father which side he was on; and "he said he would

have been like the squire who, aloof from the trouble, drove his hounds between the opposing armies at Edgehill—or was it Naseby?—and passed on to his hunting”. As Prime Minister, Mr. Baldwin publicly avowed that he would rather be back in Worcestershire, keeping an eye on his pigs. Without joy in battle, without ambition, without intellectual pretension—he insisted that he was only a “simple countryman”—he was kept at his public post (it had to be inferred) by a sense of duty. A heartening contrast to statesmen whose most conspicuous attribute was a sense of the main chance.

Though the simple countryman was in fact a successful industrialist, he preferred to present himself as squire. The preference squared with prudence, for the War and the Coalition had made the country suspicious of successful industrialists, as of all experts. Their opportunity was to return later. In 1922 it was very much to Mr. Baldwin’s advantage that he appeared a willing amateur. So thoroughly did he fulfil the requirement of being nothing that Mr. Lloyd George was, that his Coalition past was forgotten—even the circumstance that it was he who, as President of the Board of Trade, had signed the trade agreement with Russia. He was actually assisted by his undistinguished record in office, and his recantation of Coalition heresy at the Carlton Club meeting confirmed his absolution.

“Mr. Lloyd George”, he said, “is a dynamic force, a very terrible thing; it may crush you, but it is not necessarily right.” That force, he pointed out, had smashed the Liberal Party to pieces, and would, unless an end were made of the Coalition, smash the Conservative Party. Mr. Baldwin’s solicitude for his party struck a popular note, not because the people at large were deeply concerned whether the Conservative organization survived or not, but because of its opposition to Mr. Lloyd George’s ruthless

individualism. And at the Carlton Club the argument was irresistible; in vain did Mr. Austen Chamberlain plead for continued alliance against the “common foe” of Socialism—Mr. Baldwin had revealed a foe much nearer at hand.

So the first Conservative Government for seventeen years came into being. Bonar Law, under sentence of death from cancer, took up the Premiership with many misgivings. “I don’t know where we are,” was his message to the nation. Indeed, he had no other message beyond the expression of a pious hope for “tranquillity”. Yet the electorate, with every excuse for misgivings, had singularly few, and the change of Government was accompanied by that curious telepathic condition known as an impending revival of trade. There might have been less confidence had it been generally known how dubious Bonar Law was about the capacity of some of his Ministers. He seems to have been particularly diffident about his choice of Mr. Baldwin as Chancellor of the Exchequer. Within a month or two he was to become positively remorseful over the appointment. For in December the Chancellor went to America to open negotiations for the funding of the British War Debt and concluded an agreement that ran counter to all his instructions and frightened the Prime Minister to the verge of resignation.

Mr. Lloyd George has since described the dealings between Mr. Mellon, then Secretary of the United States Treasury, and Mr. Baldwin as “in the nature of a negotiation between a weasel and its quarry”, and the result as a “crude job, jocularly called a ‘settlement’”. Seeing that Mr. Baldwin committed his fellow taxpayers to a rate of interest twice as high as the rate negotiated between France and America, and eight times as high as Italy’s rate, and to total payments, over sixty-two years, of \$11,105,965,000 on a funded debt of \$4,600,000,000, whereas the equivalent

sums in the French settlement are \$6,847,674,104 and \$4,025,000,000, Mr. Lloyd George's criticism does not seem unduly harsh.

Bonar Law was startled when he heard of the terms, but he hoped, since Mr. Baldwin had no authority to bind the Government to an agreement, that diplomacy might retrieve the blunder. When, however, the Chancellor returned from his excursion he announced that he had pledged Great Britain to the settlement. The Prime Minister had to choose between acquiescence and the disruption of his Cabinet, and he acquiesced. Later he was to decide that he had paid too high a price for Party unity. Shortly before his death he told Mr. Lloyd George "how much he regretted that he had not resigned sooner than approve the terms which Mr. Baldwin had arranged".

More and more it seemed that for a Government to commit itself to a policy of tranquillity at that stage of post-War history was as pointless as it would have been for Noah to have inaugurated a back-to-the-land movement on the second day of the deluge. Now that Mr. Lloyd George was out of the way, M. Poincaré was in the full enjoyment of his revenge upon the Germans for having scared him out of the Elysée in 1914, and in January the French occupied the Ruhr. A few of the more loyal readers of the *Daily Mail* may have obeyed Lord Rothermere's injunction, repeated daily at this time, to take "Hats Off to France", but none but addle-pates were exposed by the demonstration; a very modest share of perspicacity was required by this time to see that the remote prospect of making Germany pay had become, with the Ruhr invasion, astronomically remote. The day when the kerb-peddlers in the Strand were to sell thousand-mark notes for a penny was at hand. M. Poincaré's filibustering meant new anxieties for the Government, apart from the complication of the reparations question, for there were

British troops in Cologne, and the avoidance of friction between them and their late comrades in arms—represented largely by Senegalese—was a matter of considerable delicacy. Happily, the wisest thing for Britain to do was to do nothing. Mr. Bonar Law and Mr. Baldwin were the very men for such an emergency.

The Opposition naturally made the most of the Ruhr embarrassment, but the most was not very much. Mr. Snowden was probably right when he denounced the occupation as “cruel and oppressive and in contravention of the Treaty of Versailles”. Sentiment had not recovered so far from the War that it was likely to be violently stirred by oppression inflicted on Germans, and it had moved far enough for few people to care whether the Treaty of Versailles was strictly observed or not. In any case, there was no way of forcing France to withdraw her troops. Germany and Britain exchanged notes, Germany and France exchanged notes, Britain and France exchanged notes—and M. Poincaré’s men stayed in the Ruhr.

Doing nothing, however useful in foreign policy, could not so easily be defended when it came to debates on the 1,385,000 unemployed. And Labour, reinforced at the General Election by a storming-party of “wild men from the Clyde”, was proving inconveniently active in criticism. They revived the methods of the Irish Nationalists—obstruction, shouting down, all-night sittings—and caught the Conservatives unawares. Three times before the Budget was introduced the Government met with rebuffs. In spite of everything the commercial barometer kept rising, trade returns for the first quarter of the year showed a considerable improvement, and Mr. Baldwin, in his first Budget, was able to reduce income-tax.

Mr. Baldwin’s personal popularity had grown amazingly in the few months in which the country had known him as a major political figure. Amazingly, because for once

popularity was wholly honourable. Two years earlier Mr. Baldwin had made a gift to the State of one hundred and twenty-five thousand pounds. The only announcement he made of this gift and of its significance was in a letter to *The Times*, signed simply, "F.S." (the initials stood for Financial Secretary, the office he then held in the Treasury). Beforehand he had consulted his wife and his son. "He told me", says Mr. Oliver Baldwin, "of how, during the War, he had been disturbed at the money his investments were bringing him in from the production of war material, and how he had felt it to be 'blood-money'. He had therefore made calculations and decided to hand to the State every penny he had made in excess of what he was receiving before the slaughter began. . . . The result of that gift has brought my father's income to less than it has ever been since 1908." Incidentally only one other man in England responded to the appeal of "F.S.", in his letter to *The Times*, for similar sacrifices.

The secret of "F.S." was kept until early in 1923, and then disclosure brought Mr. Baldwin the reward of affectionate admiration he had so amply earned. When it became apparent that Bonar Law's ravaged body had come to the end of its endurance and that he must hand over the Premiership, it had also become apparent that his Chancellor was the man to succeed him. Within six months the obscure handy-man of the Treasury and the Board of Trade had established himself, partly by force, and partly by inertia of character, as a national leader. Bonar Law himself, though he had a warm personal regard for Mr. Baldwin, was otherwise tepid in his appreciation; "I suppose", he said, "it will have to be Baldwin." He was much more emphatically right than he knew. It *had* to be Baldwin—not simply because Austen Chamberlain had not yet lived down his Coalition record, or because Lord Curzon would have ascended to office as to a howdah—but

because this extraordinarily ordinary Englishman answered, more completely than any possible competitor, to the temper of the second post-War phase.

If the country had not been dazzled beyond further endurance by Welsh wizardry, it is unlikely that Mr. Baldwin's Worcestershire rawness would have seemed a quality of statesmanship. If Mr. Lloyd George had not been suspected—rightly or wrongly—of inordinate personal ambition, it is unlikely that Mr. Baldwin's almost sluggish disinterestedness would have appeared so reassuring. Dexterity against clumsiness—opportunism against forthrightness—energy against laziness—the advantage, at that weary moment was overwhelmingly with the safe Anglo-Saxon substantives.

And then, as soon as the fatally appointed leader came into his inheritance, he threw it away. The embodiment of slow-moving caution acted with a precipitancy that took away the breath of both friends and opponents.

The new Prime Minister assumed office on May 21, and for a time there was a fair measure of tranquillity in home affairs, with just enough distraction abroad to draw attention away from the dole queues. Lord Curzon, at the Foreign Office, had an entertaining but inconclusive skirmish with Comrade Chicherin, the pretext being the Bolshevik “War on Heaven”. Stimulated by the protests of the *Morning Post* against the repression of the Russian Church, Lord Curzon addressed a stern note to Moscow, and was told, in reply, to mind his own business; a second stern note threatened to cancel the Anglo-Russian trade agreement, and a second reply, sufficiently conciliatory but brilliantly vague, closed the exchanges. Onlookers who had not hitherto suspected Lord Curzon of a fanatical belief in the Sermon on the Mount, assumed that his sortie had been intended from the beginning to destroy the trade agreement, so that Chicherin, by turning the other cheek,

had been the real victor. Another foreign diversion was provided by United States Prohibition officials who boarded British liners at New York and confiscated all the liquor they could find. After some hundreds of pounds worth of drinks had been seized a compromise was arranged whereby British ships were allowed a certain latitude, though considerably less than was allowed to Broadway speakeasies.

Domestic interest was aroused by a dockers' strike which lasted in London for seven weeks. At one time two hundred ships were waiting in the Thames to be unloaded, and the more nervous newspapers became concerned for the city's food supply. At first the strike was national, although it was unauthorized by the trade unions, but the London dockers were the most obstinate, for the good reason, as it turned out, that they were receiving relief from the Poplar and Bermondsey boards of guardians. As soon as the ratepayers put a stop to the relief the men went back to work.

But all these were trifles compared with the problem of unemployment and the remedy that Mr. Baldwin suddenly prescribed for it. Preference was discussed, as usual, at the Imperial Conference, and the discussion received the usual inattention from the public. Tariffs seemed a foolishly academic subject. And then the Prime Minister startled the country by a speech at Plymouth, declaring that the only way to fight unemployment was by protecting the home market. "Neither employers nor workmen", he said, "should be unfairly exposed to the merciless attacks of foreign competition, when our foreign competitors are able to shelter themselves behind the walls of their own high tariffs." He made it clear that the Government intended to go to the country on the issue.

Mr. Baldwin has often been reproached with timidity. In the autumn of 1923 he was a Hotspur. Parliament

re-assembled, after the Summer Recess, on November 13. Three days later it was dissolved. The election was automatically fixed for December 6. The Prime Minister could have postponed the fight until January, in order to "educate" the electorate. He did not wait, presumably because he supposed that an issue that was clear to him must be clear to the humblest political intelligence. He made no allowances for the strength of tradition—a strange blunder for a Conservative; he forgot that the Opposition had confidence born of a series of successful defences of Free Trade; he ignored the fact that the Liberal and Labour enemy were united, whereas the Conservatives had not had time to agree as to what system of tariffs they wanted. With sudden, inexplicable recklessness, he plunged—and remained submerged.

When the worst was known, when it became clear that Mr. Baldwin would have to resign, when—O horror!—it was realized that the reversion of office must go to a Socialist, there was a pretty exhibition of panic in the Press. The *Daily Mail* declared that a Labour Government would undermine the Constitution; and then suggested that the King should ignore Constitutional procedure by sending for Mr. Asquith instead of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald. But in January, 1924, Mr. MacDonald took office as the head of the first Labour Government in the history of this country.

If the rise of Mr. Baldwin had furnished one kind of proof that Britain had shed its War-like ways of mind, Mr. MacDonald's accession to office was proof of another, and more obvious kind. The man who, at the outset of the War, had said, "I believe in peace, rightly or wrongly, and I will never haul down my flag," was still made to pay for the unpopularity of his belief seven years later. That he was unseated at Leicester in the khaki election of 1918 was not, perhaps, surprising, but it might have been thought that by 1921 heads would have cleared a little; yet, at the

Woolwich by-election that year, in a constituency that had been made safe for Labour by Will Crooks, Mr. MacDonald was defeated by a Bottomley candidate—the only issue, for the voters, being that Bottomley's man had won the Victoria Cross and Mr. MacDonald was a "pro-German". There was a great deal of uneasiness when, after the fall of the Coalition, the man of peace came back to Parliament as the Leader of the Opposition. The *Daily Telegraph* warned its readers not to be dazzled by Mr. MacDonald's new importance; the man had undergone no real change of heart and was still an incorrigible pacifist. When he showed himself a capable Parliamentary leader, when the efficiency of Labour's staff-work was proved by the defeat of Bonar Law's Government on a technical question of Civil Service recruiting—the "Lytton entrants" issue—a few students of politics realized that a Party hitherto considered capable only of making "scenes in the House" might fairly soon be making laws there. But it is reasonable to say that the majority of the electors whose votes in December, 1922, made the first Labour Government possible did not know what they were doing. They voted *against* Tariff Reform, not *for* Labour.

So, though Labour's success was important, there was something accidental about the importance. As yet Mr. MacDonald was an alien figure. It is related that on the first day of his Premiership, he made a point of going for lunch to the 1917 Club as a demonstration that his new dignity made no difference to his old association with that mildly bohemian and verbally revolutionary circle. He was approaching the club door when one of those young women who find Gerrard Street a congenial promenade saluted him—"Hullo, Yorkshire boy!" The "Lossie loon" entered the club with accelerated pace. Half a dozen years later even the highly specialized interests of a young woman of Gerrard Street would hardly have prevented recognition of

the illustrious Scotsman; in 1924 the Lossiemouth legend was not yet born, the sternly—not to say solemnly—handsome mask had not been multiplied in a million picture-pages and on ten thousand cinema-screens, the conventicle voice had not reverberated in a nation's loudspeakers.

The Labour Ministers kissed hands, and the Constitution survived. After the howls and whimpers forecasting red ruin, Parliament seemed surprisingly and gratifyingly like its predecessors, and there was reassurance in the fact that although Mr. MacDonald was in office he was not in power; he had no majority without the Liberals and ruled only with Mr. Asquith's consent. The new Prime Minister could not be reproached with lack of confidence or lack of energy, for he appointed himself his own Foreign Secretary. Several of his ambitious followers would have been better pleased if he had chosen some other way of recognizing the paramount importance of retrieving the blunders of Lord Curzon; but as time went on it was to become apparent in a score of ways that Mr. MacDonald's devout belief in his own opinions made him impatient of counsel. And, so far as foreign affairs went, his self-confidence had the justification of a brilliant beginning under very discouraging conditions.

The heaviest clouds on the foreign horizon hung over the Ruhr and Russia. Briskly Mr. MacDonald set to work to bring M. Poincaré to reason, and a public who had been warned to distrust the Prime Minister as an "internationalist"—sinister word!—were astonished and extremely pleased to find him giving M. Poincaré such a talking-to as no Conservative Imperialist had ventured on.

"The people in this country", Mr. MacDonald wrote to M. Poincaré, "regard with anxiety what appears to them to be the determination of France to ruin Germany and to dominate the Continent without consideration of

our reasonable interests and future consequences to European settlement. They feel apprehensive of the large military and aerial establishments maintained not only in Eastern but also in Western France. . . . They question why all these activities should be financed by the French Government in disregard of the fact that the British taxpayer has to find upwards of £30,000,000 a year as interest on loans raised in America. . . . Our taxpayers have also to find large sums to pay interest on the debt of France to us."

In August Mr. MacDonald's resolute policy was crowned by the London Settlement. The Dawes Plan was to come into operation forthwith. The evacuation of the Ruhr was to begin at once, and be completed within a year. The Settlement also restored the economic unity of Germany, the French and the Belgians consenting to withdraw their customs barrier within German territory.

"The settlement with France is a brilliant feather in Mr. MacDonald's cap," said the *Daily News*. "To have succeeded where Bonar Law, Baldwin and Lloyd George failed is a considerable achievement." Even the Conservative Press added its congratulations.

While Mr. MacDonald was setting Western Europe in order, Mr. Arthur Ponsonby, his Under Secretary, had been negotiating with the Russians in London. The task was formidable. British business, while most eager for a share of Russia's trade, was desperately afraid of importing Russia's political and economic ideas. It was bad enough that the Bolsheviks denied God, "nationalized" women, burned churches and shot bishops. But that they repudiated capitalism and had no respect for private property was more than the City could stand.

On the other side, the diehards of Bolshevism looked down with derisive hatred upon the British Labour Party.

It was discouraging to Mr. Ponsonby—who had been a palace page—when Zinoviev, at the opening of the fifth world congress of the Communist International, declared, “Our party in Britain must even now fight against MacDonald, because, when later on the masses become convinced of his baseness, they will remember that we Communists said this long ago.” When Zinoviev added that in his eyes Ramsay MacDonald was just a British Kerensky, a traitor to the working class, a puppet in the hands of the bourgeoisie, Anglo-Russian agreement seemed distinctly improbable.

The outcome of negotiations begun under such ominous auspices, and on many occasions on the verge of failure, was an agreement reached on August 6, embodying a commercial treaty, under which Britain received “most favoured nation” status, extending in return the Export Credit Scheme of 1920 to Russian trade; and a general treaty, whereby the Russian Government for the first time acknowledged that, within certain conditions, British landholders’ claims would be honoured. When these had been met on prescribed lines, a third treaty was to be drawn up. Should the settlement prove abortive, there was to be no third treaty, and no extension of government credits for the purposes of encouraging British traders to do business with Russia. The government undertook, however, that on the signing of the third treaty, they would recommend Parliament to guarantee the interest and sinking fund of a loan to Russia.

This contingent loan, which was to be incorporated in a separate contingent future treaty, was seized upon by the Tories and Liberals as an excuse for uniting to destroy the MacDonald regime. From that day until the Labour Government fell its enemies saw nothing in the Russian Treaty but a loan which was not there.

Although Mr. Lloyd George had himself in 1922 made

an abortive attempt at Genoa to regularize relations with Russia, he was the first to attack Mr. MacDonald for a more thorough effort to do the same thing. Moreover, in May, 1924, the National Liberal Federation had urged the need for reconciliation and the resumption of trade relations with Russia. They had even advocated a loan for that purpose. But consistency had never stood in Mr. Lloyd George's way when there was an opportunity to be snatched. During the General Election his message had been, "Whatever you do, keep the Socialists out." Afterwards he supported the Socialists. Now he saw his chance of turning them out and took it.

Even without the assistance of Welsh Machiavellianism Mr. MacDonald's Government was in difficulties. Successes abroad could not atone for failures at home. And there had been no home successes.

To begin with, the public had a tendency to regard the Labour Cabinet as a menagerie rather than as a council of State, and the efforts of some promoted trade union organizers to accommodate themselves to Court dress certainly provided a considerable amount of grim amusement. Romantic contrasts abounded; a miner, Mr. James Brown, and his wife left their Lanarkshire cottage to take up residence for a few fabulous days in the Palace of Holyrood, when Mr. Brown was appointed to represent the King at the Assembly of the Church of Scotland; a former policeman became an officer of the Royal household; the dress shirts of Mr. J. H. Thomas, ex-engine-driver and ex-commissar of the Triple Alliance, became proverbial. So, for a while, the Government enjoyed the popularity of a pierrot troupe, but unluckily they could do very little in the way of governing. Bold action was impossible when at every step a compromise had to be negotiated with the Liberals, and Labour's main object seemed to be a parade of respectability with a view to encouraging the electorate



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to trust it with a little more power next time. It was, however, difficult to believe that Ministers had any initiative to show, even if they had been given the chance. Some competent work was done in the matters of housing, education and pensions: but it was awkward when the Minister of Labour's premature boast of a decline in unemployment was followed by a very definite increase in the figures. And it was unfortunate that the President of the Board of Trade, Mr. Sidney Webb, should have allowed himself, in a moment of irritation, to say that he was "not aware that the Board of Trade existed to find markets for particular industries in this country". It was excusable that the Minister of Labour, badgered about the shortage of employment, should protest that he could not "produce rabbits out of a hat"—but it was not politic. There were too many hostile leader-writers waiting to make the most of an indiscreet phrase. No Government, at any rate under modern conditions, has had to make shift with as little Press support. Throughout the whole country there was only one daily newspaper—and the *Daily Herald's* circulation was then insignificant—which backed Labour; as for the others, it was difficult to decide whether the openly hostile majority or the few that simulated impartiality were the more damaging.

Any innuendo was considered fair ammunition. The Prime Minister was first pilloried as an enemy of society on the ground that he opposed capitalism. Then his personal integrity was questioned on the ground that he was a capitalist. The query was indirect, but unmistakable. In a Stock Exchange article the city editor of the *Daily Mail* drew attention to the fact that Mr. MacDonald held a number of shares in a Scottish firm of biscuit-makers, and this led to the disclosure that he had accepted a present of a Daimler car, and a sum for its upkeep, from the head of the firm, Sir Alexander Grant. Sir Alexander had been a

schoolmate in Lossiemouth, and he explained that the car was an expression of admiration for the character of an old friend, and also a contribution to the service of the State, since it conserved the Prime Minister's energy for his work. Some time after the less scrupulous newspapers had exploited Mr. MacDonald's Daimler to his disadvantage they accepted with equanimity the revelation that Lord Oxford had been subsidized for years by the millionaire Lord Cowdray; this was not a question of the upkeep of a car, but of a regular income of £3,500 a year, and when Lord Cowdray died Lord Beaverbrook headed a whip-round to make good Lord Oxford's loss.

Altogether the Government's credit was dangerously depleted when it settled its own fate by a blatant piece of bungling. On representations from the War Office the Director of Public Prosecutions authorized the arrest of a Communist, John Ross Campbell, the author of an article in the *Workers' Weekly*, which was alleged to be an incitement to mutiny. Labour's left wing members were dismayed by the prosecution; they were already suffering from Communist criticism in their constituencies, and they felt that the spectacle of a "workers' Government" pursuing a proletarian on such a charge was altogether too serviceable to Red hecklers. So a protest was made. The prosecution was withdrawn. Sir Patrick Hastings, the Attorney-General, offered a lame and disingenuous explanation of the withdrawal—Campbell, he said, was an ex-soldier who had been grievously wounded in the War—but it was impossible to evade the accusation of political interference with the course of justice. On a vote of censure, the Liberals marched into the same lobby as the Conservatives, and the first Labour Government came to an unimpressive end.

The one consolation for Socialists came, after the election, in the knowledge that their defeat had been an extremely expensive one for some of their enemies. As the *Observer*

noted, "Mr. MacDonald's administration received its death-blow at the hands of Liberalism, which committed Parliamentary suicide by the same singular act." Indeed, the chief difference between Mr. Lloyd George and the Chinese merchant, who hanged himself on his debtor's doorstep in order that the debtor might be plagued by his ghost, was that the Chinese merchant knew what he was about.

Even if the General Election of October, 1924, had run a normal course it is unlikely that Mr. MacDonald would have returned to office. Labour had shown industry and investors that it was a much tamer beast than had been reported, but that was not enough to convert groups whose interests were essentially Conservative; and tameness had disappointed the workers. Apart from the Ruhr settlement, which had been reached too late to benefit Mr. MacDonald but was to be a first-rate asset to his successor, the Government had achieved nothing of moment. In any case, it was not yet Mr. MacDonald's appointed hour; he had been pushed, prematurely and accidentally, on to the stage before the previous actor had finished his turn. The interruption had taught Mr. Baldwin this much wisdom—there was no wild talk about tariffs this time. . . .

But the election did not run a normal course. On October 25, the Saturday before the poll, newspapers throughout the country "splashed" the Zinoviev Letter. There has never been a more mysterious document than this, which purported to be signed by Zinoviev, the President of the Third (Communist) International, and counter-signed by McManus, President of the Communist Party of Great Britain and a member of the Third International Executive. Its more pointed passages read:

"The time is approaching for the Parliament of England to consider the Treaty concluded between the

Governments of Great Britain and the S.S.S.R. for the purpose of ratification. . . .

"The proletariat of Great Britain, which pronounced its weighty word when danger threatened of a break-off of the past negotiations, and compelled the Government of MacDonald to conclude the Treaty, must show the greatest possible energy in the further struggle for ratification and against the endeavours of British capitalists, to compel Parliament to annul it.

"It is indispensable to stir up the masses of the British proletariat, to bring into movement the army of unemployed proletarians, whose position can be improved only after a loan has been granted to the U.S.S.R. for the restoration of her economics and when business collaboration between the British and Russian proletariats has been put in order. It is imperative that the group in the Labour Party sympathizing with the Treaty should bring increased pressure to bear upon the Government and Parliamentary circles in favour of the ratification of the Treaty.

"Keep close observation over the leaders of the Labour Party. . . . Organize a campaign of disclosure of the foreign policy of MacDonald.

"Armed warfare must be preceded by a struggle against the inclinations to compromise which are embedded among the majority of British workmen, against the ideas of evolution and peaceful extermination of capitalism. Only then will it be possible to count upon complete success of an armed insurrection. In Ireland and the Colonies the case is different; there, there is a national question, and this represents too great a factor for success for us to waste time on a prolonged preparation of the working class.

"But even in England, as in other countries where the workers are politically developed, events themselves may

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more rapidly revolutionize the working masses than propaganda. For instance, a strike movement, repressions by the Government, etc.

“From your last report it is evident that agitation-propaganda work in the Army is weak, in the Navy a very little better. Your explanation that the quality of the members attracted justifies the quantity is right in principle, nevertheless it would be desirable to have cells in all the units of the troops, particularly among those quartered in the large centres of the country, and also among factories working on munitions and at military store depots. We request that the most particular attention be paid to these latter.

“In the event of danger of war, with the aid of the latter and in contact with the transport workers, it is possible to paralyse all the military preparations of the bourgeoisie, and make a start in turning an imperialist war into a class war.

“The Military Section of the British Communist Party, so far as we are aware, further suffers from a lack of specialists, the future Directors of the British Red Army.

“It is time you thought of forming such a group, which, together with the leaders, might be, in the event of an outbreak of active strife, the brain of the military organization of the party.

“Go attentively through the lists of the military ‘cells’, detailing from them the more energetic and capable men, turn attention to the more talented military specialists who have for one reason or another left the Service and hold Socialist views. Attract them into the ranks of the Communist Party if they desire honestly to serve the proletariat and desire in the future to direct not the blind mechanical forces in the service of the bourgeoisie but a national army.

"Form a directing operative head of the Military Section."

With the letter was published a Foreign Office Note to M. Rakovsky, signed by a permanent official, Mr. J. D. Gregory, "in the absence of the Secretary of State". This drew attention to the subversive propaganda contained in the letter, and pointed out the utter impossibility of negotiating with a Government which was closely linked with the Third International.

The Letter was, of course, described as a "bombshell", and it was intended to be explosive. Actually there were various quarters (in no way connected with the Foreign Office) where there was previous knowledge of the matter. It is significant that three days before the publication the London correspondent of the Manchester *Evening Chronicle* wrote, "There is a report here, to which much credence must be attached, that before polling day comes a bombshell will burst and it will be connected with Zinoviev."

The bombshell burst in such a cloud of smoke that it is doubtful whether the enveloping obscurity will ever be penetrated. Among many conjectures and allegations, a few facts may be established. The document was brought to the *Daily Mail* on October 23 by a business man, Mr. Conrad im Thurn. The Letter was a copy, and no original has ever been produced. Mr. Thomas Marlow was then editor of the *Daily Mail*, and in a public squabble with Lord Rothermere seven years later he declared that Lord Rothermere had no knowledge of the Letter until it had been published; he added that Lord Rothermere's opinion at the time was in favour of supporting Labour, as he was sure that Mr. MacDonald would come back to office. Both of these statements were denied by Lord Rothermere with great heartiness. Long before Mr. Marlow saw the Letter it had been shown to high officials

at the Foreign Office. Sir Eyre Crowe, the Permanent Secretary, knew of it a day or two before Parliament was dissolved on October 9—that is to say, nearly three weeks before Mr. Marlow. Foreign Office officials agreed that nothing could be done until exhaustive inquiries had been made into the Letter's authenticity. By five o'clock on the afternoon of October 24 they were apparently convinced that the document was a copy of a genuine letter, and Sir Eyre Crowe gave the order for publicity.

The circumstances of the publicity were such as to suggest that Mr. MacDonald, as Foreign Secretary, was aware of the Letter and tried to suppress it until after the election, and that he was foiled by the enterprise of the *Daily Mail*. This suggestion was emphatically discredited by Mr. Austen Chamberlain, as Foreign Secretary in the new Government—but by that time Labour had been routed. Mr. MacDonald's own public comment was, "When the newspaper that had the Letter kept it back very cleverly until the period of the election when it could create a maximum psychological effect, without giving an opportunity for a rational dissipation of that effect, my suspicions of its authenticity deepen." But the *Daily Mail* insisted that the Letter was published as soon as they received it.

Everything that could be done to heighten the shock on the day of publication was done. Lord Curzon, Sir William Joynson-Hicks, Mr. Churchill, Mr. Amery, Sir Alfred Mond and Sir Robert Horne all agreed, with furious emphasis, that Mr. MacDonald was disgraced and that the Zinoviev Letter had shattered all Labour's hopes of success at the polls.

On the second point these eminent Conservatives were right. And yet the oddest thing about this superlatively odd and very questionable document is that it should have had any effect on the election whatever. Even if it were

authentic it was entirely irrelevant to any issue in the election. Neither the Third International nor the Communist Party of Great Britain had ever attempted to hide their revolutionary purpose, and in so far as the Letter expressed subversive aims it merely revealed what everyone had known for years before the election.

In the first decisive moments, however, the electors were bewildered into thinking that the Letter was addressed to the Labour Party, and that Mr. MacDonald, Mr. Thomas and their impeccably bourgeois colleagues were directed in all their acts by instructions from Zinoviev. Men and women hurried to the ballot-boxes to make sure that the Soviet was kept at bay. From Moscow came a prompt message denying the authenticity of the Letter—but it was useless. The tide of jugglery and mystification swept Mr. MacDonald out and swept Mr. Baldwin in, and Britain was able to settle down again to whatever tranquillity could be discovered.

CHAPTER VII

THE BRIGHT YOUNG PEOPLE

To be young was very heaven.

—WORDSWORTH.

Post-War Youth—*The Young Visitors*—Oxford “Bags”—The Prince’s Jumper—Treasure Hunts—Bright Young Authors—“Happy Childish English”—Short Skirts and Short Hair—Pyjama and Bottle Parties—The Gossip Page—Gate Crashing—Charleston—Councillor Clarke.

THE swing of sentiment in favour of the amateur in politics, which had placed Mr. Baldwin at the head of the Government, was paralleled by a swing in favour of another sort of amateurism, the inexperience of youth. Just as it seemed that political difficulties had become too intricate for the expert and that there was a chance that inspired *naïveté* might succeed in muddling through, so it seemed that the exceeding complexity of the general human situation might best be faced by the young, the tyros in living. Youth had been knocking at the door since Ibsen’s day, and the hammering had become deafening during the War. Age had willed the conflict, or had permitted it, and had sent youth to die in millions in retrieving its blunders—that was an indictment impossible to answer, by counter-charges against the young, for the young had no responsibility except that of dying, and that they had amply fulfilled. The soldier poets, as spokesmen of youth, had expressed a passion of indignation against stay-at-home old men who boasted of having “given” their sons; they were bidden to “sneak home and

pray you'll never know the hell where youth and laughter go". And when the soldier returned to find himself forestalled in his enjoyments by the middle-aged and elderly who had "done well out of the War", his bitterness deepened—the theatre stalls and the night-club tables were occupied by old men and young women, and the warrior was stinted of his Nietzschean recreation. For the young women were not deluded by the Shakespearean superstition that crabbed age and youth cannot live together, and the young men were challenged in the one activity in which they could claim, without dispute, superior efficiency. The "youth movement" of the year or so immediately following the War was, in fact, a claim to be able to do better than the elders who had bungled both the War and the Peace, a protest against the inefficiency of age and a demand for responsibility; but the succeeding movement was a flight from any responsibility that could be evaded.

Whatever its aspirations, youth was guaranteed a good press. Both the newspapers and the political parties—or the political parties through the newspapers—were looking ahead. The best assurance for circulation in five, ten or fifteen years was to catch your readers young. Little boys and girls were no longer born into this world as little Liberals or else little Conservatives, that is, as predestined readers of the *Daily News* or the *Daily Mail*; it therefore became necessary to send canvassers—Teddy Tail and such small deer—into the nursery. In 1920 Pip, Squeak and Wilfred were indirect propagandists for whatever policy Lord Rothermere may happen to be supporting in 1935; on occasion the propaganda could be very direct, for at the time of the coal lock-out of 1921 a villain was introduced upon the stage of this daily juvenile drama, in the form of a "Bolshevist hound" named Popski. The children's page was an antidote to the Communist Sunday School, and the regimentation of the very young was carried further by the

formation of fantastically named leagues and clubs, “Gugnuncs” and “Donjeroos”. These zoological freemasonries penetrated the nursery and the schoolroom, but something more was needed to link up the child with the grown-up reader of formed newspaper habits, and something more was found in cycling “features” designed to interest the thousands of youths and girls who crouch and pedal in droves away from London on Sunday mornings, in the organization of dancing championships, in suburban tennis tournaments, and, above all, in endless articles about, by, for and against modern youth. Modern youth was frank and fearless; modern youth was shameless and irreverent—eager and idealistic—cynical and disillusioned—fundamentally serious—incurably frivolous—healthy—neurotic—impatient of shams—heedless of tradition—filled with the spirit of “service”—eaten up with selfishness—jazz-mad—sport-mad—sex-mad—splendidly sane. Modern youth, like the modern girl, was always good copy.

Another, and wider, motive for youth propaganda by Big Business has been suggested by Mr. Wyndham Lewis. As the mechanization of work in office and factory increases, the importance of experience in the worker decreases; youth has the advantage of being stronger and cheaper—the argument being that “the man of forty should have less, not more, than at twenty—because he is an adding-machine, or a stamp-machine, or a sorting-machine, that is wearing out. The youth of twenty does exactly what he does, and he is fresher.” Mr. Lewis adds, “From being a romantic fact, Youth has become a political fact.” But youth’s dilemma was to have become a political, without ceasing to be a romantic, fact.

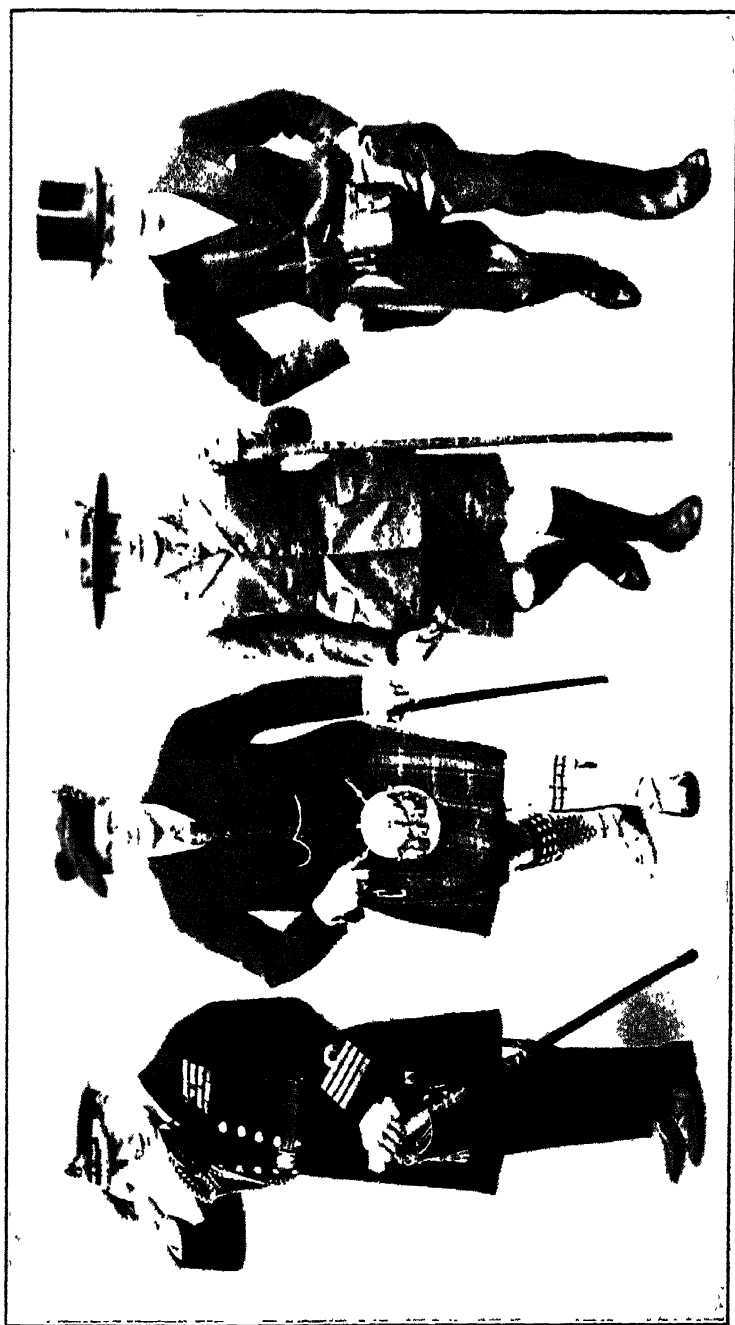
Still, for several years after the War youth was a portent rather than any kind of fact. Young people who were old enough to be publicly articulate or active in 1920 and 1921 were old enough to have been emotionally involved in the

War, in its last phases at any rate, and old enough to have had a pre-War childhood. The typical Oxford or Cambridge undergraduate was a grown man who had returned from two or three years in the Army; his youth was missing, believed killed. "I have been young, and now am not too old," wrote one of them, Edmund Blunden:

I have seen a green country, useful to the race,
Knocked silly with guns and mines, its villages vanished,
Even the last rat and last kestrel banished—
God bless us all, this was peculiar grace.

God bless us all, this was peculiar philosophy from young Apollo, who should have been magnificently unprepared for the long littleness of life. People turned from such grim precocities to "The Young Visitors".

This picture of late Victorian high society reflected in the eyes of a nine-year-old bourgeoisie was exhumed, after a lapse of nearly quarter of a century, from the childish notebooks of Miss Margaret Mary Julia (or "Daisy") Ashford, to become the publishing success of 1919. Between three and four hundred thousand copies of the book were sold, and Miss Ashford's favourite adjectives, "mere" and "sumpshious", passed into current slang. While the newspapers were whooping in hysterical chorus about the Prince of Wales's American tour—creating a conflict in many of their readers between regard for a pleasant young man and disgust at hyperbolical vulgarity—it was a delicious relief to meet the Prince of Wales of an infantile myth, who wore "a small but costly crown", "lapped up his strawberry ice" and called "majestikally" for "champaign". The only objection raised to the story of Mr. Salteena and Ethel Monticue was that it was not childish enough. It was rumoured that Sir James Barrie, who had provided a preface, was actually the author, and the publishers' reader, Mr. Frank Swinnerton, had to reassure readers, in a full column of the *Daily Mail*, that they were being given a



THE PRINCE OF WALES

genuine nursery product. A parallel, in a more restricted field, to Miss Ashford's success was the admiration lavished by serious critics on the drawings of the nine-year-old Pamela Bianco. There was, however, as little genuine youthfulness in Pamela Bianco as in Daisy Ashford: only the *naïvetés* of spelling and vocabulary differentiated the stale, adult, middle-class snobbery of “The Young Visitors” from that of the gossip page and “Social and Personal” column, and Pamela Bianco merely provided a gauche restatement of Botticelli.

These substitutes for youth filled in the time until the genuinely post-War young arrived. On Boat Race Night in 1924 the West End of London was overrun, as usual, by hundreds of undergraduates, but they were not quite the usual undergraduates. The first-year men, at any rate, were the first instalment of those who had been children when the War ended, and they wore a distinctive dress to emphasize the change. Something had happened to the flannel trousers which had been for many years part of the undergraduate uniform. The new trousers billowed round the wearers' legs in incredible amplitude, and the flannel drapery trailed on the ground, hiding the feet. Strange dyes had transformed the conventional steel-grey; these trousers were fawn, or silver, or delicately pink or mauve. Where the accepted width of the trouser-leg was seventeen inches at the knee and fifteen inches at the ankle, the corresponding measurements of the undergraduates' trousers was twenty-six and twenty-four inches—the dimensions of the new “Oxford bags” were reported by every popular newspaper and carefully noted by East End tailors. Within a few weeks London was full of Oxford bags worn by young men whose Alma Mater was Oxford Street. After half a dozen years man was really getting out of uniform.

The civilian clothes worn by the newly demobilized soldier had been almost as utilitarian and unobtrusive as

his khaki. Jackets were short and close-fitting, trousers narrow; the War had killed the silk hat and morning coat as the ordinary office worker's daily wear; the straw hat had become the occupational badge of the Smithfield market-man; the cardigan jacket was a newer development, but it still buttoned down the front, pretending to be a waistcoat. When the Prince of Wales, in 1923, appeared on the golf-course at St. Andrew's wearing beneath his jacket a buttonless garment knitted in horizontal stripes of brightly coloured wool the newspapers drew astonished attention to the innovation. That Fair Isle jumper seemed almost as revolutionary as a Phrygian cap. With the wide flannel trousers it forms the distinctive garb of the typical young Englishman of the middle of the post-War decade. It was the garb of a period of Tory ascendancy, when the Universities recovered a social influence which had been in abeyance under the mixed regimes of the War and the Coalition; and it was a departure, just as Baldwinism was, from the War idiom.

The flight from khaki, once begun, led to a flamboyancy in men's clothing that transcended the braveries of Edwardian dudes and went back to pre-Victorian dandyism. Double-breasted waistcoats, barely waist-deep, and wide trousers pleated at the waist were exquisitely reminiscent of the eighteen-thirties. There was a new elaboration in evening dress. The blank smoothness of the shirt front became patterned with tiny diamond-shaped indentations, and figured white ties and waistcoats matched shirts; collars spread their wings and bows expanded like starched butterflies. The *Daily Mail* began to publish regular articles on men's fashions: in 1919 their expert, Fonthill Beckford, would have had very little to write about; in 1924 he was easily able to fill a column with a description of the permissible variations in evening waistcoats. It was a little disconcerting. The elderly spokesmen of

youth had represented the younger generation as being ascetically determined to take over the control of affairs from the old men, as almost fanatically eager to be useful—and now that the younger generation had emerged it showed much less interest in being useful than in being ornamental. In Italy *Giovinezza* was the hymn of Fascism; in France and Germany the typical youth-movements, the *Camelots du Roi* and Hitler's Brownshirts, were fiercely political; Britain's youth-movement was expressed by the Bright Young People.

The first Bright Young People were not all particularly young; one of the leaders of the group to which the name was first applied was an actress whose stage career began during the Boer War, and their brightness, although sufficiently silly, seemed innocuous. Its earliest advertised manifestation was the Treasure Hunt, a nursery game played with motor-cars. The deeper implications of Bright Youth were emphasized by two plays, "The Vortex" and "Spring Cleaning", both extremely sentimental, but to their first audiences desperately cynical.

The first was written by a twenty-four-year-old actor named Noel Coward who was polished at Croydon to become the mirror of Mayfair. The protagonist of his play, a feverishly bright young man, was distraught by the discovery of his mother's unchastity, but instead of stabbing Polonius behind the arras, he sat down at the piano and frantically played jazz music; in the last act the youth extracted a confession from the mother that her promiscuity had been the habit of a lifetime, and in revenge confessed that he was a drug addict. Thus were the sins of the children visited on the fathers and mothers. If youth was no better than it should be—and it had no intention of being better—the responsibility, in moments of remorseful hysteria, was passed to the elder generation: if young people could not, without violence to reason, honour father

and mother, why should they put themselves to the inconvenience of obeying the other commandments? That was the implied logic of Mr. Coward's successful melodrama. It was all the more powerful because the seniors had already surrendered their position; Mr. Somerset Maugham's comedy, "Our Betters", had represented fashionable maturity as a dreary routine of passionless and haphazard lechery.

"Spring Cleaning" was significant not for its sincere sentimentality, like "The Vortex", nor for its sharp-eyed cynicism, like "Our Betters", but because of its acute recognition of the existence of a new demand. Its author, Mr. Frederick Lonsdale, was over forty and had prospered as the librettist of lusciously emotional musical comedy; but Maids of the Mountains—indeed, virgins in any geographical situation—were outmoded by the beginning of 1925, and so Mr. Lonsdale turned to the production of more marketable young women. The central situation of "Spring Cleaning", in which an old-fashioned husband abashed his frivolous wife and her friends by introducing a prostitute at a dinner-party, might have served at any time since the days of Dumas *fils*. The topical, and revolutionary, point of "The Vortex" and "Spring Cleaning" was that they established two new types as stock figures of contemporary drawing-room drama—the male and the female sexual invert. Mr. Coward might go back three hundred years to "Hamlet" for a theme to vulgarize, and Mr. Lonsdale might refurbish Second Empire sentimentality about harlots; they were both distinctively modern in their new dramatis personæ, the lisping homosexual undergraduate and the monocled shirt-fronted Lesbian.

The intellectual and æsthetic background of the inversion cult will be considered later; for the moment it is relevant as a fashion followed by an astonishingly large minority,

without protest from the majority, of Bright Young People. Oxford Bags were not only an affirmation of extravagance as against efficiency, a counter-blast to khaki, but they served also to neutralize sex. Rather than trousers they were pseudo-skirts. They suggested Panurge's renunciation of the badges of manhood when he laid aside his breeches and codpiece and draped his legs in loose folds of superfluous cloth; there the comparison ends, for Panurge longed to be married. There was, indeed, no reason why the post-War young man should be enthusiastic about virility. All that hundreds of thousands of his elder brothers had got out of being men was the privilege of being slaughtered. Man, choking in the mud of Passchendaele, had abdicated human dignity. No more an individual he was a disgustingly helpless victim of his own machines, and of forces which he could neither comprehend nor control. Passchendaele was not very remote, either in past history or in future possibility, in 1924. Even if manhood were not to involve youth in the responsibilities of war, the responsibilities of adult life in peace were almost as oppressive. Besides, the game had been given away—the elders were really no abler or nobler than the young, and their pretensions to be so had been shattered by a thousand too candid Victorian and Edwardian memoirists.

In *Vile Bodies*, Mr. Evelyn Waugh summarizes the Bright Young view of the preceding generation—that it differed only from the young in having one more vice, hypocrisy. In that novel, the most topically significant of its kind, the representative statesman is governed by chloral and half-willed lechery—"just Prime Minister, nothing more, bullied by his colleagues, a source of income to low caricaturists . . . he sipped his champagne, fingered his ribbon of the Order of Merit, and resigned himself to the dust"—religion is represented by a scheming Jesuit:

the newspaper magnate is a moron: and the moral reprobation of aunts and mothers is simply envy in Sunday clothes—"Oh, to be young again, Kitty. When I think, my dear, of all the trouble and exertion which we had to go through to be even moderately bad . . . those passages in the early morning and mama sleeping next door." Traditional maturity, traditional manhood and traditional womanhood were "debunked". Far better to be as little of an adult, and as little of a man or woman as possible, to remain forever Bright and Young, to refuse to graduate, to play at *Treasure Hunts* or *Sardines*, to romp, in a sad, relaxed imitation of infant nakedness, in the new seaside playgrounds of the Lido and Cap d'Antibes.

This was too obviously useful a dodge to be left to the really young as a monopoly. If the twenty-year-olds cheated by refusing to grow up the forty-year-olds saw no reason to play fair. So they grew down. "*YOUNG AGAIN*" ran the headlines of a newspaper description of "one joyous hour at Deauville"—"Happy Childish English". It reported how—

"English men and women come out to play with model yachts and kites and big rubber balls. . . . A tall, blond man with the carriage of a guardsman and the limbs of a heavy-weight boxer comes striding down the shore, an old sun-hat on his head, and in his hand a toy yacht. . . . A slender girl rushes up from the sea to meet him. She may be twenty or she may be thirty. When a woman keeps her figure she can also keep the secret of her age; but whatever her age, she is now a little girl again walking beside a big boy, and begging prettily to be allowed to play with the beautiful boat."

Considerable cunning is required, in the examination of post-War juvenility, to discriminate between youth by the calendar and youth that was the effect of keeping that school-

girl or schoolboy complexion. As the reporter noted, when a woman keeps her figure she can also keep the secret of her age (the only popular reticence), and there were many new accomplices in that conspiracy of silence—the dietetician, the gramophone course in “slimming”, the beauty-parlour, the multiplication of tennis clubs and golf-courses, the increased facilities for contraception.

If the age-secret was kept it did not matter much that other reserves were sacrificed. “A woman can be fully dressed this summer”, a fashion article announced in 1926, “and have only thirty ounces of clothing”—and this included an allowance of sixteen ounces for the shoes. The complete female equipment is summed up by Mr. A. Corbett-Smith as “a one-piece under-garment, a one-piece over-garment that barely reaches the knees, a slender belt for stocking-suspenders, shoes and stockings”. He adds:

“One notable business man of my acquaintance told me that he had had to abandon travelling into town by tube or bus, taking a taxi instead. He found it quite impossible to sit opposite to those young women. One of the most distinguished lawyers in the City of London told me that when his young daughter brought her girlfriends down to his house for dinner and they curled up in arm-chairs he was invariably driven to take refuge in the billiard-room. The provocation of silken leg and half-naked thigh, together with little or no concealment of the breasts, was devastating and overwhelming.”

It was, however, less overwhelming to those who were not old enough to remember the time when ankles were immodest and calves indecent.

Watch Committees gave up denouncing the nakedness of chorus girls in touring revues—the chorus could display nothing that was not displayed in any dance-hall, any municipal mixed bathing-pool, or, on warm summer days,

in any street. In order to stimulate a shiver of provocation in one of his revues Mr. Charles B. Cochran had to interpolate, among scenes of normal and unnoticeable nakedness, a revival of the Moulin Rouge *pas de quatre* with its shocking excess of clothing. For the more women exposed their bodies the more they were concerned to neutralize the female attributes. The elderly squires who raged against the shameless impudence of their daughters in showing more than any girl of difficult virtue should show, complained in the next breath that the modern girl had nothing to show, she was "unsexed"—breastless, hipless and hairless. With the Eton crop went a "straight, boyish silhouette". The world had advanced from the Salomonic difficulty—"We have a little sister, and she hath no breasts: what shall we do for our sister in the day when she shall be spoken for?" It was now the elder sister who was embarrassed.

"The unforgivable sin against smartness this spring", the editress of a popular fashion magazine warned her readers, "is to have a 'figure' . . . the modern *elegante's* frocks are streamlined as severely as a racing car." Fortunately, with the assistance of "reducing-salts", orange-juice, massage, an eighteen-day diet (imported from Hollywood), a "daily dozen" of gymnastic exercises, and a clever dressmaker, the elder sister could approximate as closely to the Brooklands standard—for all hasty visual purposes—as the adolescent.

"Boys", as well as "girls", came out to play. Many of those jolly sand-boys of Juan-les-Pins and Frinton "would never see forty again"—indeed, had never seen forty, because they had kept their eyes tightly closed. When Mr. Eliot's Prufrock discovered that he was growing old he decided that, as a last expedient, he would "wear white flannel trousers and walk along the beach", but he had little hope that even this masquerade would persuade



MR. GEORGE BERNARD SHAW ON HOLIDAY AT ANTIBES

the mermaids to sing to him. Therein he paid the penalty of half-heartedness, for, if he had worn nothing but bathing drawers and *scampered* along the beach, the mermaids (very much concerned with keeping their own figures and age-secrets) would have found him entirely acceptable. But *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* was written half a decade before the Lido formula for rejuvenation had been discovered.

England had heard about the Lido a century ago when Shelley described the "bare strand of hillocks heaped from ever-shifting sand . . . an uninhabited seaside which the lone fisher, when his nets are dried, abandons", but the Lido which began to exhibit itself in the picture papers in the late summer of 1922, presented a strangely altered landscape. This half-mile wide strip of Italy (a country which, otherwise, seems either behind or ahead of the times) sounded the exactly contemporary note of expensive and vulgar idleness with unmatched precision. Along the spine of the sandy ridge was built a row of large hotels, symbols of the post-War plutocratic Bohemia—symbols of gregariousness without brotherhood, of luxury without taste, of expenditure without lasting acquisition, of wealth without responsibility, of display without splendour, rootless, passionless, heartless and brainless.

The new playground differed from all its predecessors, Monte Carlo, Nice, Cannes, Deauville and Biarritz; it had no roulette or baccarat tables, no racecourse, no Croisette, no neighbouring mountains; it had simply its hotels and a strip of sand where it was not even possible to walk a hundred yards in any one direction, because the shore was fenced off in sections; the loungers and the bathers took their pleasure in internment camps. The "waste and solitary place" which Shelley loved because of its illusion of boundlessness, became successful through overcrowding and an almost penal restriction of movement. With

titanic irony, the largest and most expensive hotel on the beach was called "Excelsior". In its sandy beach-compound were deployed all the symptomatic imbecilities of the post-War period—the superstitious sun-worship that stands in the same relation to the science of radiotherapy as a corroborree does to philosophic deism, the self-conscious promiscuity, the exhibitionism, the infantilism, and the inversion and confusion of sex. Although the Lido slipped, after a couple of feverishly fashionable seasons, into the suburbia of seaside playgrounds, it transformed the character of them all, so that now any bathing-place in a municipal park in the British provinces is a "Lido", and its symbolic contribution to the social life of our time is the beach-pyjama suit. This was the distinguishing uniform of the neutral in the sex-war, obliterating the opposition of petticoats and trousers. In brocaded pyjamas men and women could meet in the American bar of the Excelsior as in a no-man's- and no-woman's-land.

Pyjamas were clearly too serviceable to the peculiar needs of the Bright Young People for their use to be limited to one season and one place. The Pyjama Party became a Bright Young institution. One "Pyjama and Bottle Party" given by the stepson of an elder statesman and his actress wife provided the newspapers with columns of copy, and may serve as an example of these festivities in their more decorous moods.

"The hundreds of guests", according to the *Daily News*, "came in pyjamas the colours of which might have been the envy of the foremost futurist artist of the day. The first arrival was a pretty flaxen-haired girl of about nineteen, wearing pyjamas with stripes of salmon pink, blue, red, green, orange, black and white. Her contribution was a bottle of 1840 champagne which was immediately consumed"—let us hope, for the sake of the

“WHAT A LOT OF PARTIES”

consumers, that this aged liquor was *fine champagne*—“Mr. and Mrs. — (the host and hostess) were attired in sleeping-suits of orange. Many of the men’s pyjamas were trimmed with lace. The bottles of refreshments which the guests were expected to bring provided an amusing diversion. The second bottle was gin; the third, hair restorer; the fourth, health salts; and other bottles included distilled water, beer, ink, petrol, Ethyl, smelling-salts, Thames water, Jordan water, cabbage water, and water from a pool alive with tadpoles. The party was supposed to drink these ‘refreshments’. . . All the while, in another room, the orchestra was playing dreamy music.”

“What a lot of parties”, soliloquized the hero of the testament of Bright Youth, Mr. Evelyn Waugh’s *Vile Bodies*—“Masked parties, Savage parties, Victorian parties, Greek parties, Wild West parties, Russian parties, Circus parties, parties where one had to dress as somebody else, almost naked parties in St. John’s Wood, parties in flats and studios and houses and ships and hotels and night clubs, in windmills and swimming baths . . .”

There was, for example, the “circus party” for which a Bright Young dress designer rented a peeress’s house (he had to take it for a year for the sake of his one night’s party) and that seemed to the gossip-writers “one of the most brilliant functions of the season”. “‘Come as a circus character’ was the injunction on the invitation card, and the fact that only 250 guests were invited led to considerable competition for an invitation. . . . Performing wolves skipped merrily round an arena”; there were acrobats, “a performing and somewhat lethargic bear, and other stunts. . . . Lady Eleanor —, who led a pony up the stairs, was continually asked whether she was a part of the show. . . . There was a boat, which you sat

in and then promptly fell out of . . . Lady Diana ——'s face was painted bright green."

Still more revealingly Bright were the invitations sent out by four young debutantes to three hundred guests—"We are having a party with Romps from ten o'clock to bedtime. Do write and say you'll come, and we'd love to have Nanny, too. Pram Park provided. Dress: Anything from birth to school age." This invitation to return to the cradle was irresistible—the resulting party was, indeed, too successful.

"The so-called young people", according to the *Daily Express* next morning, "arrived in perambulators. They rode rocking-horses in the gardens, chased each other on donkeys and scooters, and bowled hoops. Screams resounded in the brilliantly lighted square (Rutland Gate, Knightsbridge). The guests were dressed as babies in long clothes, Girl Guides, Boy Scouts, and nurses. They chased each other round the square with comforters in their mouths, carrying toy boats, dolls, and pails and spades. An attempt was made to take the donkeys into the house. They were led up the steps, a butler pushing them from behind. Three sailor boys were mounted on the animals, but the floor of the hall was too slippery for them, and they fell to the ground, scattering their riders among the screaming 'children', who crowded on the stairway. While some of the guests played in the garden, others amused themselves in the house by playing with trains and other mechanical toys. Late in the evening the crowd was scattered by the violent ringing of a fire-bell. It was only some of the Bright Young People arriving in a taxi-cab. Cocktails were served in nursery mugs, and the 'bar' was a babies' pen."

A memorable party! The three hundred infants of Rutland Gate are historic figures, but at the time they

were not treated with the respect that is due to history. Proletarian onlookers beyond the railings of the square garden lacked the detachment to recognize this exhibition of nursery-nostalgia, this noisy panic, this screaming exorcism of the spectre of responsibility, as significant: they shouted violent criticism, some sang "The Red Flag", and for many days to follow harsh letters were written to the papers. Other dwellers in Rutland Gate, whom the merry prattle of the little ones had kept awake until five in the morning, were also unsympathetic. One of the debutante hostesses retorted, "There was nothing vulgar about the party, whatever else is said about it."

By this time it had become apparent that standards of vulgarity were not what they had been. With the evasion of the limitations of age and sex went further freedoms. Responsibility to class—"good manners" and the other impedimenta of birth, education and property—was found as great a nuisance as any other responsibility. Politeness, after all, is an hypocrisy, the fraudulent pretence of the civilized man that he is not ruled by greed, lust and fear; and the only virtue claimed by the young was a negative one—they thought they were not hypocrites.

Once again Mr. Coward and Mr. Waugh come to the assistance of diagnosis. "Fallen Angels" made extremely popular entertainment out of the drunken squabbling of two young women who would in an earlier century have been classified as "gentlefolk"; and as Mr. Coward was compared by hasty and muddled admirers with Congreve, it is instructive to compare the exquisitely mannered bickering of Araminta and Belinda in "The Old Bachelor", or Mrs. Frail and Mrs. Foresight in "Love for Love", with the tipsy slanging-match in "Fallen Angels". Not Millamant, but Doll Tearsheet, is the spiritual ancestress of the Coward heroine; the way of the world has become the way of the half-world.

Mr. Waugh notes the fondness for gutter-idiom—" 'Go away, hog's rump,' said Adam in Cockney"—and when the daughter of a peer sent a wedding present to a "Society bride" with the inscription, "Another present for your lousy collection," the gossip writers explained that she had used "the favourite adjective of the Bright Young People". As early as 1924 a conservative witness, the *Spectator*, had accepted "bloody" as being in habitual and unremarked use by young women of the upper middle class. Translated into the milder terms of the more distant suburbs, freedom of speech was typified by *Punch's* pert flapper addressing her father as "Old bean".

The translation into terms of æsthetic and intellectual pretension deserves separate consideration, but one aspect of highbrow conformity to Bright Young fashion may be noticed—the cultivation and imitation of the most raucously "democratic" forms of entertainment. For a season Bloomsbury crowded out Kennington at the Elephant and Castle to see Tod Slaughter in "Maria Marten, or the Murder at the Red Barn"; Collins's music-hall in Islington flourished on the enthusiasm of bourgeois poets, painters and anthropologists; at the Cave of Harmony cabaret the most applauded entertainment was the revival of the comic songs of the eighties, and it was the chance visit of a Jewish impresario to this club that brought about the popular exploitation of "veterans of variety" in the modern music-hall; at studio parties singers of folk-songs and sea chanties were silenced by more enterprising young men and women who had recovered, by arduous research in the British Museum, the words and music of "I Like Pickled Onions", "Tommy, Make Room for Your Uncle", or "When the Old Dun Cow Caught Fire".

Levelling down and levelling up became, for new reasons, a much swifter and simpler process than it had ever been. As *These Charming People*, *Fallen Angels* and *Crazy*

Pavements interpreted Mayfair to the suburbs and provinces, so had *Pelham* interpreted the great vulgar to the small a century earlier, but the new go-betweens had new assistance. With their marble and music, gilt and red plush, the cheap mammoth restaurants provided a colourable and highly coloured imitation of fashionable magnificence; a Corner House is a half-way house. There were few really exclusive amusements left. A cabaret singer might be retained for the enjoyment of those rich enough to sup at the Embassy Club or the Café de Paris, but only for a week or two—then the gramophone made the same entertainment available to the million; the cheapening of the motor-car, the enterprise of popular dress shops in reproducing each new fashion within a month of its first appearance in the Rue de la Paix, technical advances in Press photography, all helped to accelerate social vulgarization. Even the advertisements for cosmetics contributed.

The anonymous and apocryphal "lady of quality" was a veteran of advertising, testimonials by actresses had had their day, more striking "names" were needed—and they were readily available. Wives and daughters of peers, wives and daughters of celebrated politicians, women whose social influence it was unnecessary for the advertising copy-writer to exaggerate, entered into public competition to push the sale of face-cream; there were their photographs, there their signatures, there flatteringly intimate little messages for every suburban housewife and factory girl to read. "Those of you", wrote the Countess of Oxford and Asquith, "who have hunted or mountaineered . . ." The assumption that the housewife was not the unwilling servant of a gas-stove and a hire-purchased vacuum-cleaner, that the factory girl divided her time between Melton Mowbray and Mürren, was irresistible. "I am not young and never have been beautiful," the Countess con-

tinued with friendly frankness, "but I have not a wrinkle on my forehead"—because, "after hunting", she always used Somebody's cosmetics.

Lady Ashley, whose husband was the heir to an earldom dignified by two centuries of public service, posed a slightly different problem in the care of the complexion; her favourite pastime was yachting and "the hot sun of the Riviera" was the enemy of the "alabaster skin" which she was too candid—among friends—to disavow. Like the Countess, she relied on Somebody's face-creams. The Colonel's Lady and Judy O'Grady were made sisters over, as well as under, the skin—a free sample was supplied for twopence in stamps. It is impossible to say how many of the millions of young women who read these advertisements took them at (in a double sense) their face value; those who did were presumably uplifted by the belief that, for twopence in stamps, they could be as good as their betters, and the more critical certainly revised their opinion of the dignity and responsibility of the aristocracy. In either case a barrier crumbled.

Other advertisers used a somewhat subtler form of attack by exploiting the slang of the Bright Young People—"all the most luminous and emancipated people are spurning their fluffies and frillies and *unconditionally* embracing Soandso's streamline vests and panties . . . Brief as a boy's for the *completely* uninhibited." The cost of being luminous, emancipated and completely uninhibited was only eight-and-elevenpence per garment, "Blank's, as you know, always do manage to be the first to pounce on the amusing and most *exclusive* delights and haul them down from the heights of sheer indulgence to a level of really comforting prices". Democracy can go no further than the mass-production of exclusiveness.

But the most effective of all go-betweens were the gossip-writers and the press photographers. Looking back to the

gossip pages at the end of the War, the student is astonished to discover how largely they were composed of paragraphs that were serious in intention, if not in effect; politicians and soldiers occupy the centre of the stage, even in the popular picture-papers, and interspersed with the chatter are stern references to the wickedness of industrial agitation; the solemnity is hardly leavened by the "good stories" about actors and actresses and facetious criticism of such "revolutionary" artists as Epstein, Augustus John and Nevinson. For all the brave pretence of intimacy, Society is viewed from the fringe of the crowd; information about the peerage is all too obviously gathered from Debrett and the Social and Personal column of *The Times*, for the gossip-writer is still merely a journalist. As time passes, the statesmen and soldiers recede, the comedians and leading ladies—priests and priestesses of the "Brighter London" cult—become central figures; the peerage is seen at closer range, mainly because it dances with the leading ladies at the Midnight Follies and the Grafton Galleries. In the third phase—the era of the Bright Young People—the number of theatrical figures worth turning into gossip copy is restricted—Tallulah Bankhead, Noel Coward, Oliver Messel are new and commanding figures, however—and, most significant of all, the peerage is not written about; it writes. The Marquess of Donegall, describing, "Almost in Confidence", the most successful cocktail party of the week, had a first-hand authority denied to "Mr. Chatterbox", who was under some suspicion of having bribed the butler or peeped through the keyhole; when, Sunday by Sunday, Viscount Castlerosse discussed the affairs of his celebrated acquaintances, the man or woman who had paid twopence for the revelation felt assured that the subjects were actually his lordship's acquaintances, though they might not in future be his warmest friends. And if Lady Eleanor Smith did not

know her Bright Young People, who could claim to? In the earlier stages of this *rapprochement* between the Second and the Fourth Estates the fact that Lord Donegall, for example, was a hard-working and competent journalist was as irrelevant as the fact that he was Lord High Admiral of Lough Neagh; the important thing to the gossip-reader was that he had actually taken part in the previous night's Treasure Hunt. Lady Eleanor Smith saved thousands of ambitious young women from the shame of using superseded slang when she intimated that "sick-making" and "shy-making" were no longer amusing. The readers, at any rate, had the illusion that all youth was one bright family. One of the popular songs of 1927, commenting ironically on the title of an Arlen best-seller, had the refrain, "If these people can be charming, then we can be charming, too"; and this expressed, without any irony, the aspiration of multitudes outside Mayfair. It was an aspiration that received due rebuke from pastors and parents, for, as the Conservative committee-woman in *Vile Bodies* agreed, gossip revelations were "such a terrible example to the lower classes, *apart from everything* . . . There's our Agnes, now. How can I stop her having young men in the kitchen when she knows that Sir James Brown has parties like that at all hours of the night?"

Disregard of conventional politeness was an affirmation of class-exemption as well as one of its advantages. Bad manners simplified life, so long as there were enough unfashionable people—of whose good manners one might take advantage—to go round. The deliberate inconsequences of the Bright Young People always assumed the existence of a "dowdy" mass who could be relied on to perform essential but tiresome services, for Brightness was essentially parasitic and if everybody, or even many, had been Bright the system would have come to a dead stop.

Lord Donegall quoted, as typical Bright manners, the behaviour of a peer's daughter who took him to a private dance (for which he had no invitation) and then disappeared for an hour; when she returned she explained, "There's a dance next door, but it was awfully dull, so I had a rest on the hostess's bed. I wonder whose house it is."

A little Brightness could always enliven dull hospitality: Mr. Cosmo Hamilton, the playwright, is the authority for a story of the young man who was so bored by the entertainment offered in the ballroom and at the buffet that he locked himself in his hostess's bedroom and spent a happy hour arranging her underclothing, brushes, scent-bottles and other trinkets in complicated patterns on the floor.

Hostesses soon gave up the attempt to distinguish between invited and uninvited guests. The gate-crasher was the symbolic social figure of the seasons of 1927 and 1928. There were actually columns of newspaper report and discussion because Lady Ellesmere, at a dance at Bridgewater House, asked three young women whom she had not invited to leave. The three young women felt that they had been harshly treated—why, they asked, should they have been singled out when Lady Ellesmere had admitted that she had counted three hundred complete strangers at her dance? A chivalrous young man came forward to shoulder the full responsibility. He had been invited to the dance, so that he had taken for granted that he was free to bring with him a party of people whom Lady Ellesmere did not know—it was, he said, the custom. Few personal differences have been given such wide publicity. Lady Ellesmere wrote to the newspapers, because she felt that the exposure of gate-crashers was a public duty; the young man made statements to reporters in defence of Bright Young behaviour; the mothers and brothers of the three young women also communicated with the Press. Nobody thought it worth while expressing

surprise that gate-crashing should be so easy, since everybody had accepted it as permissible to wander in and out of parties without troubling to speak to your host or hostess, even if you knew them.

Lord Donegall relates that when a dramatic version of *Vile Bodies* was produced this year a young married woman turned to him and said, "Can we ever have been really as dreadful as that?" But the novel was not a satire, it was a composite photograph of a phase of social life which was then, indeed, closing, but which had been the best advertised phase of social life in London for half a dozen years.

The story of the Bright Young People, of those who were too deeply committed to hysteria and inconsequence ever to emerge, ends in pathological violence. In "*Vile Bodies*" there are two violent deaths and a suicide. Parties furnished material for police-court and inquest reports instead of the gossip page. At one in Chelsea, when a young man fell from a second-storey window he was left lying for some time in the street below, and when eventually a doctor arrived another young man threatened him with a knife. This Bright Young Person was "later seen from the house opposite giving vigorous stabs to a door". Another young man was observed in a basement room, "entirely alone, throwing the crockery about and smashing everything". There was no music at this party, but the neighbours heard groans and imprecations. At another party a man had his eyes nearly gouged out, at another a girl's ear-drum was broken by a blow, another—which was announced as "the swan-song of the Bright Young People"—was followed by a motor-car smash in which one of the guests was killed, and at the inquest a peer's daughter gave evidence that the entertainment had been very largely a matter of drunken fighting. One of the Brightest of young women was convicted of being in possession of

dangerous drugs—she had obtained cocaine by the device of taking more than one “dope cure” at a time. By 1931 the first batch at least of Bright Young People had passed over into a reaction, and the movement had lost its original verve. Its novelists joined the Church of Rome or took to gardening in Huntingdonshire. Its dramatists glorified the middle-class home to the tune of “Land of Hope and Glory”. Its young women married and had babies. Its young men were elected to Parliament as supporters of the National Government. Its gossip-writers reported, in some astonishment, that debutantes nowadays did not smoke, drink or swear.

The Bright Young People are particularly useful to the historian because of their hysterical and *louche* exaggeration of tendencies not so conveniently isolated for inspection in the youthful average. The Bright Young People were a few hundred against the normal millions, and where they played with perambulators the normal millions indulged a similar infantile impulse by buying edition after edition of Mr. A. A. Milne’s *When We Were Very Young*. Newspaper report credited Mr. Coward and Mr. Milne with being the wealthiest of modern writers, Christopher Robin and Winnie-the-Pooh being only slightly less remunerative properties than cocktail girls and young divorcees. Where congregations of Bright Young People made a homosexual ritual of the Russian Ballet the normal millions kept “The Beggar’s Opera” running at the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith, for year after year, its vigorous thief-and-strumpet humours turned “all to favour and to prettiness”. Where the Bright Young People sun-bathed at Antibes restrained by one censor only, the Press photographer, the normal millions had to fight for their holiday nakedness, inch by inch, with easily shocked borough councillors and clergymen who found the shortest cut to extra-parochial publicity in denunciations of shameless bathing-girls.

Only at the very end of the decade did an English version of the great German "Wanderyogel" movement, "Hiking", provide a thoroughly democratic extension of freedom in clothes and companionship.

At Eden Roc, for example, there was no Councillor Clarke. Few reformers have achieved as intricately hyphenated a celebrity as this citizen of Tonbridge, who was known as "the anti-mixed-bathing champion". And few have employed as great a variety of attack. He appealed, of course, to morality. "I have a great social evil to remedy; I will lift up my voice against the barbaric licence of women's dress and the vulgarity of their bathing costumes." But his argument was also æsthetic—"The sight of a woman in a bedraggled bathing costume, with her hair straggling over her eyes like a wet Skye terrier, drives from a man's mind any thought of marriage." There were wider horizons—"I condemn mixed bathing on imperialist and patriotic grounds," he said. His adventuring imagination conjured up new problems for the thoughtful, as when he asked, "Can you imagine a woman smoking a cigar while nursing her child?"

Two years before Mr. J. B. S. Haldane's *Daedalus* had predicted the experimental realization of ectogenesis in 1951, and ten years before Mr. Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* had prophesied the shameful defeat of viviparous generation, Mr. Clarke said, "In less than a hundred years hence less than a third of our children will be born of woman; the remainder will be produced by incubators." A thousand voices of excited—and perhaps unduly excitable—elders spoke in one when the Councillor expressed his disapproval of the athletic girl—"The clothes of the tennis girl are shocking. Look at those audaciously low-cut jumpers! Look at the lawless freedom of her scanty skirts! Abominable!" Of course, the tennis girl enjoyed this enormously: if only her twenty-five-year-old

partner had been as susceptible to the audacity of her jumper, the lawlessness of her skirt as Mr. Clarke . . . ! When the Councillor looked on Brighton beach and described its rather chilly diversions as a "sinful orgy" the bathers were, on the whole, grateful; they had not realized that they were having such a good time. But all councillors were not as entertainingly ineffective as Mr. Clarke, who could not, for all his eloquence, prevent mixed bathing in his own town of Tonbridge. Only a year ago the Thames Conservancy authorities forbade women to appear in punts in bathing costume; Biarritz might do as it pleased, but Bournemouth jibbed at the bather who walked through the streets with her swimming-costume muffled in the puritanical shapelessness of a macintosh.

These geographical and economic considerations imposed a film upon brightness. At studio parties young men who had had the advantages of education at Magdalen or in Montparnasse might dance with young men who had acquired the ultimate social graces at Wellington Barracks, and young women might dance with young women, but in the popular dance-palaces the Charleston, which swept the country in 1926 and 1927, was rigidly orthodox in its sexuality.

The sexuality, perhaps, was more obvious to middle-aged beholders than it was consciously expressed by the dancers. A good deal of the criticism of the Charleston came from people who were not too moral, nor too dignified, but simply too short-winded, to dance it. The old men were swept off the night-club floors by a direct attack on their physical staying-power. The dancing craze, given a terrific impetus by the War, was not necessarily a youth movement in its beginnings, but it became one because of ever-increasing acceleration.

The Charleston made its entry, inconspicuously and rather inauspiciously, in the summer of 1925—like all

post-War dances it came from America where it had been introduced a couple of years earlier in the revue, "Running Wild". When it was first demonstrated at a conference of British teachers of dancing, one of them, Mr. Santos Casani, said, "It isn't a dance, it is merely a new rhythm, and in this country dancers will take up a new step but not a new rhythm, especially an up-and-down jerk like the Charleston." A year later three hundred Charleston lessons were being given every day at Mr. Casani's school alone. When, in the spring of 1926, the experts had been proved wrong and the new rhythm had invaded every dance-floor in London the newspapers began to take notice of the phenomenon, and their attention was uniformly and violently hostile. The *Daily Mail* "featured" the Charleston under such headlines as "A Vulgar Dance", "The Kicking Dance", and denounced it as "a series of contortions without a vestige of grace or charm, reminiscent only of negro orgies": the kicking movement "caused stockings to be torn and legs to be bruised", and a reporter sent to a popular ball-room brought back a harrowing story of numbers of casualties who had to leave the floor as a result of severe kicks. The *Westminster Gazette* banded the hostesses of the season in an anti-Charleston conspiracy.

But there were more Charleston dancers than ever. In restaurants notices forbidding the dance had to be taken down. Further reports from popular ballrooms were discouraging—"the floor managers tried hard to stop the dancers from performing the exaggerated Charleston, but it was impossible as there were so many people doing it". When newspaper chiding failed other censors of manners continued the unavailing opposition. The Rev. E. W. Rogers, vicar of St. Aidan's, Bristol, was only a little more emphatic than scores of other clergymen when he said, "Any lover of the beautiful will die rather than be associated with the Charleston. It is neurotic! It is rotten!

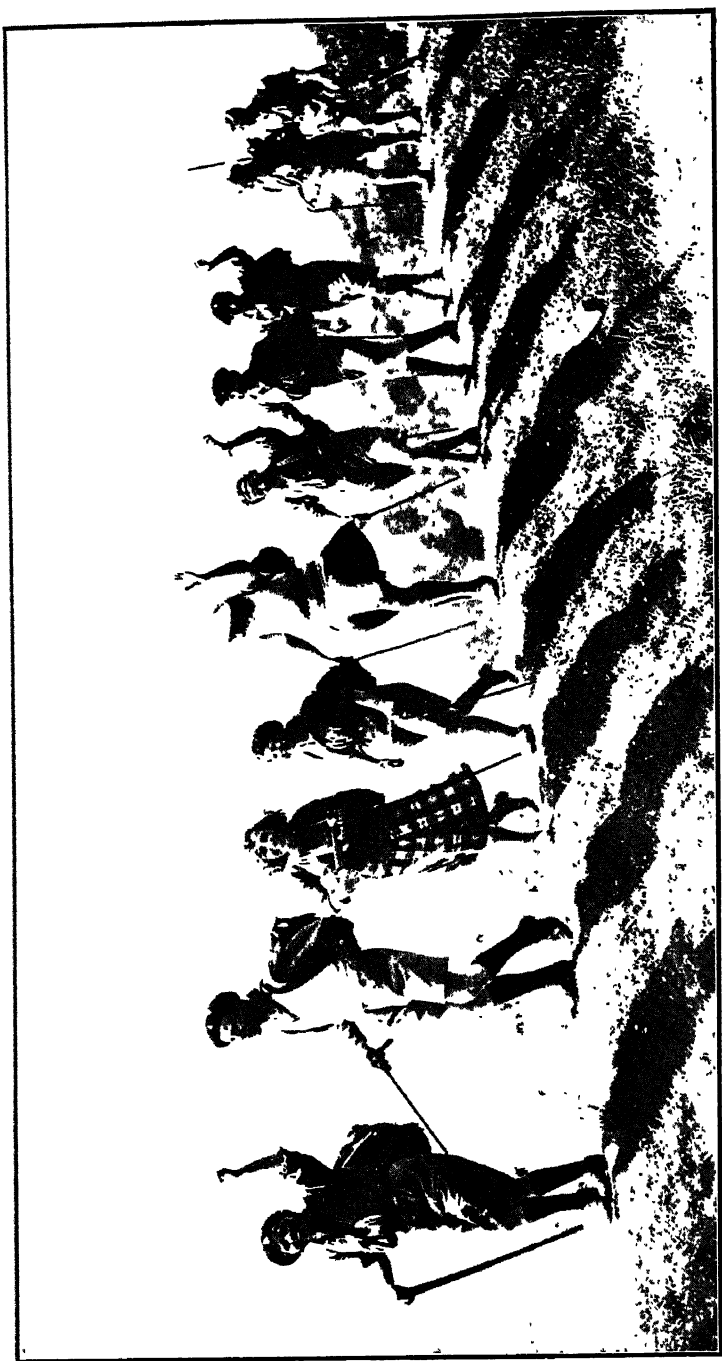
It stinks! Phew, open the windows!” The Bishop of Coventry was alone among his brethren when he said, “It is a very nice dance.” The masses agreed with the bishop and ignored the vicars. “This peculiar jerky motion is not confined to a few minutes at an occasional dance; it is becoming a habit of daily movement,” said a doctor—for the Charleston was a menace to body as well as mind and soul. The school medical officer at Walsall reported that “children of all ages now seem unable to keep their feet still”, and he foresaw the development of a new form of St. Vitus’s dance, “Charleston-chorea”. From other doctors came warnings that “the shocks to the body may displace the heart and other organs. . . . Charleston knee, paralysis and total collapse due to the contortions, shocks, jolts and jars of the Charleston are quite common.” The Charleston couples were undismayed. A popular American actress, Miss Adele Astaire (not then allied to the ducal house of Devonshire), replied for them. “Poor soup-heads,” said Miss Astaire, “it would not hurt anyone who had the sense to dance it properly. It is just the most glorious thing ever, and people are not going to stop dancing it just because a few poor fish strain their Little Maries doing it.” By the beginning of 1927 the “soup-heads” and “poor fish” had abandoned the battle. The Charleston was triumphant. It even became an element in the traffic problem; at Newcastle the police complained to the magistrates of the obstruction caused by hundreds of young people dancing the Charleston on a public highway on Sunday evenings. Youth had conquered in the ballroom, for the pace had been made too hot for the middle-aged; at the beginning of the dancing craze the foxtrot was played at an average speed of thirty-five beats to the minute, but when the Charleston arrived the time was accelerated to sixty to the minute. It was significant that when the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing

decided to reform the Charleston their chief concern was to modify its athletic character, and their president announced that "this new Charleston is suitable for the most aged of dancers". The dance bands, however, would not slow down to allow the aged to join in the procession.

The demand for speed—and therefore youth—was changing the character of popular entertainment. Musical comedy, since George Edwardes had fixed the type in pre-War days, had been static, sonorous, heavily sentimental, and now it became kinetic, noisy and naïvely cynical. The traditional heroine had been a "Balkan Princess" or a "Maid of the Mountains", the new was "Mercenary Mary" or "Little Nelly Kelly". The statu-esque full-throated goddesses of War-time revue and musical comedy retreated to the provinces or the peerage. The leading ladies who displaced them—Adele Astaire, June, Gertrude Lawrence, Jessie Matthews—were flagrantly young, for only extreme youth could keep on dancing from curtain-rise to curtain-fall. When an entire American company was imported to perform "Good News" its best advertisement was that not one of its members was more than twenty-three.

The dancing craze drew to its end as the decade wore out. Dance-palaces were converted into skating-rinks, but with very restricted success. The new figure of typical youth, the young person to whom the advertiser directed his appeal, the subject of music-hall songs and *Punch* jokes, the raw material of newspaper stunts, the target of warnings by nervous clergymen, was the hiker. But the hiker is a long day's march from the Charleston dancer, is the product of a set of economic and social circumstances unforeseen when Mr. Baldwin came back to Downing Street in 1924.

"I'm running wild—lost controll" was a popular song of that year. The young people had at least this much excuse for their headlong scampering down steep places, that most



YOUTH IN 1930.—HIKERS

of the landmarks which guided previous generations had been destroyed before they fairly set out on their journey. It seemed futile to set about making a new map when at any moment the contours of the country might be heaved and twisted by another earthquake as overwhelming as the shock of 1914. Besides, none of the surveyors were in agreement as to how many inches made a yard, no two intellectual theodolites measured the same angles. There was nothing to do but to run wild, to take sex like a cocktail—all the more stimulating for extravagance in mixing the ingredients—to play at being in “Nigger Heaven” or “Nursery Heaven”, to be *completely* uninhibited for eight-and-elevenpence, to flee from responsibilities, duties, consequences. “*Je n’ai jamais vu de figures si tristes ni derrières si gaies,*” said Foch of the dancers of Charleston’s predecessor, simple jazz. By Charleston days the field of this epigram had widened and included other activities of the Bright Young People.

CHAPTER VIII

THE GENERAL STRIKE

"But what good came of it at last?"

Quoth little Peterkin.

"Why, that I cannot tell," said he;

"But 'twas a famous victory."

—R. SOUTHEY.

Labour's Lost Security—The Miners lead the Attack—Mr. Baldwin's Bombshell—Three Hundred Thousand Volunteers—Bats and Brickbats—*The British Gazette*—Silencing the Peacemakers—Enter Sir Herbert Samuel—Unconditional Surrender—Back to Work—Labour's Debacle.

IN that second phase of the post-War period, symbolized by the dubious tranquillity of Mr. Baldwin as well as by the spurious brightness of the young, the half-way point is marked by the date, May 3, 1926. It is the date on which the General Strike began. Why it came about may be summarily answered by saying that the miners resisted a wages reduction, that the Trade Union Congress supported them by threatening to withdraw the labour of the great "key" unions, and that the Government accepted the challenge. Stopping short of the actual strike, it is the story of the Triple Alliance fight of 1921 re-told. However, an explanation of the conflict of 1926 that did not emphasize its difference from the conflict of five years earlier would be much too summary to be satisfactory. In the interval the industrial background had been transformed, and with that fundamental change the attitudes of the combatants had changed.

In the first struggles the worker had been aggressive, his confidence built up with course upon course of granite

certainties. He was a skilled worker—a member of a “superior” race—a partner (and, he felt, the predominant partner) in production in the greatest workshop in the world, the centre of the industrial universe. Those were pre-War certainties and he did not yet suspect that they were post-War uncertainties. Before the decade was half-way through the granite had begun to crack and crumble, and labour, from aggression, turned to a desperate defence.

As even academic trade unionists had at last to realize, the War had readjusted the economic balance of power, and while British industry had been diverted to the purposes of destruction Britain's customers had begun to manufacture the goods they formerly bought from her. That was serious enough, but there were graver discoveries to follow—for example, that not only Britain, but the Western world was no longer sure of industrial supremacy, for in Japan and India industrial regions were coming into being which threatened a more deadly competition than had ever been dreamed of. It dawned upon Lancashire cotton operatives that their standard of living was in far greater danger from the Bombay millhand who produced piece goods while living in squalid coolie-lines on a few annas a day, than from the most reactionary of their own employers. Jute mills in Calcutta were taking work away from Dundee, Japan was raiding many preserves of Western manufacture. It would be absurd to suggest that the working man was fully conscious that Europe, in exporting its machinery and its technical processes to the “inferior” races, had betrayed its superiority; but most British working men found life less secure because of the treason. It was not only from the East that the attack came. The production of Mr. Ford's historic “T model” car had by 1926 entered its fifteenth million. Mr. Ford paid his machine-minders high wages and in most ways was a model employer, but there were aspects of the Ford factory that boded little

good to the Nordic skilled worker. It was reported that in the new mass-production regime it was actually a disadvantage to be a skilled and intelligent Anglo-Saxon, and that better results were obtained from uneducated Slavonic and Oriental workers who did not become nerve-racked by the monotony and trivial simplifications of the new processes; indeed, it was not an advantage for a mass-producer to be able-bodied—Mr. Ford said that deaf, blind, or crippled men, of whom there were many in his factory, gave him better value for wages than normal men, being more contented and just as competent. Again, it is not urged that the lesson of Detroit was then (or is now) clearly defined in the minds of British workers, and again it is suggested that their sense of security was affected, though they knew not why.

To say that the trade unionist had been forced into a defensive posture is not, however, to explain why the wildly aggressive adventure of the General Strike was undertaken. None of the influential trade union or Socialist leaders believed in that method of attack, and Mr. Ramsay MacDonald was not expressing a merely personal opinion when he wrote, in the *Socialist Review* in 1924, "The General Strike is the last refuge of the idiot." While the stoppage was in being, Mr. J. H. Thomas, who, as the railwaymen's leader and as member of the T.U.C. General Council, was doubly committed to the General Strike, announced that he had never believed in the principle of it. Labour's leaders did not want the Strike. But they lacked courage and they lacked political capacity. Because of these dearths they were pushed and pulled into the Strike by two opposing groups who did want it—a majority of their followers, and a section of the Conservatives.

There is no mystery about the motives of the pro-Strike Tories, and to allot them a large share of responsibility is not to indict them for inhumanity or treachery. Any

man who held that there could be no industrial prosperity—and therefore no prosperity for workers as well as capitalists—until industry was secured permanently from Socialist attacks, and who held that the attacks would not cease until the enemy had been crushed in a decisive battle; such a man might honestly believe it a duty to force the final encounter, even at the cost of heavy casualties. It was confidently affirmed at the time that this view was held by some of the most influential members of the Cabinet, though not by Mr. Baldwin himself. For whatever view is taken of the justice of the Government's course, there can be no denial of its justification in triumphant completeness.

The motives of the other pro-Strike party—the union rank-and-file—are not so easily explicable. Two-thirds at least of the men who struck had no quarrel with their employers, and came out to help the miners. Only the sentimentally myopic would see their action as pure altruism, and yet only the cynically astigmatic would deny that it was largely altruistic; the men had been told that the attempt to reduce the miners' pay was preliminary to a general attack on wages, and to the extent that they believed that they were fighting in their own interests; but the Strike was also a genuine demonstration of brotherhood. When this is said, the hazardous undertaking is not sufficiently accounted for. Some theory of mass-possession, of Gadarene infection, would be needed to explain how hundreds of thousands of very ordinary Englishmen came to imagine that the General Strike could be successful—or, failing that, a Spenglerian theory that, at heart, they did not care whether it succeeded or not, that it was part of the blind Machine-Age revolt against inexorable pressure, “the mutiny of the Hands against their destiny, against the machine, against the organized life, against anything and everything”.

The explicit causes of the conflict arose from the seven

years' war between miners and mine-owners—a war in which there had been truces, but no settlement, since Smillie first led the grimy divisions over the top. Smillie himself had retired, and Frank Hodges had found other employment. Now the miners' most energetic officer was the secretary of their Federation, Arthur Cook, a crude and sentimental economist but a man of such fierce sincerity that he commanded an almost hypnotic confidence from his men. A crisis developed on wages readjustments demanded by the owners, in the summer of 1925, and the railway and transport unions threatened to support the miners by placing an embargo on the handling of coal. The Government pacified the coal industry with a subsidy, and appointed a Commission, under Sir Herbert Samuel, "to inquire into the economic position". For eight months the difficulty was shelved, at the cost of a £10,000,000 subsidy, and Mr. Baldwin was bitterly and foolishly reproached for buying off the miners with the taxpayers' money. Then the Samuel Commission reported, recommending reductions in wages as well as a reorganization of the industry.

The miners' reply was uttered by their secretary in the form of a "slogan"—"Not a cent off the pay, not a minute on the day." The owners, always anxious to weaken the Miners' Federation by partition, pressed for separate arrangements in the various districts, and the Federation insisted that the settlement should be national. The Government announced the withdrawal of the subsidy, and declared that the owners and men must negotiate an agreement. On April 23 the owners delivered their ultimatum in the form of notices terminating the existing agreement on wages and hours and setting out terms on which the men would be re-engaged as from May 1. The new terms meant all-round reductions in wages, varying according to districts and amounting, in South Wales, to cuts of fifteen to twenty-six shillings a week—and, as was expected,

the miners rejected them. The men had appealed for help to the Trade Union Congress, and that body put the question of a General Strike in support of the miners to a ballot of its constituent unions.

It would be fantastic to suppose that the General Council of the T.U.C. wanted a General Strike. They knew, if some of their followers did not, that it would be an act of revolution. A revolution was bound to shatter the snug, bourgeois world of union officialdom to bits, and the Council knew it would not be remoulded to *their* hearts' desire. They were not Lenins, and they remembered the fate of Kerensky. But they played with the threat, believing that Mr. Baldwin, who had capitulated before a milder show of force in 1925, would capitulate again, and this initial miscalculation led inevitably to blunder after blunder, so that there was not a single stage in the conflict at which the T.U.C. was not outgeneralled. Since the crisis of 1925 the Government had had ample time to prepare for battle, and they had not wasted it. Plans were prepared by transport and commissariat experts at the War Office for the distribution of food supplies, and a scheme for recruiting volunteer workers was ready long before the unions, on their side, had worked out plans for the withdrawal of labour; the country was marked out in convenient areas, each to be controlled by a commissioner armed with special powers to ensure that food and essential services were not cut off.

The T.U.C. appreciated the completeness of the Government's preparations too late. The General Council issued a statement absolving itself from all blame for "the calamity which now threatens. . . . Responsibility for the consequences that must inevitably follow a general cessation of work lies with the mine-owners and the Government entirely." The Cabinet reply was that the strike threat was a "challenge to Constitutional rights and the freedom of the nation".

On the morning of May 1 the union leaders, tired, anxious, but resolutely masking their irresolution, met at the Memorial Hall. Most of them had been busy until the small hours searching for a formula that would prolong negotiations and protect them from the responsibility of declaring war. But they were not free agents. Mr. Arthur Pugh, the T.U.C. chairman, announced that delegates representing 3,655,000 railwaymen, miners and transport workers were instructed to vote for a General Strike. There were only 49,111 votes against. Still the union executives did not proclaim the Strike. Instead they decided to hand over their powers to the General Council of the Trade Union Congress, and from that moment the General Council were in nominal control of the situation. How unreal their control was the events of the next forty-eight hours were to emphasize unmercifully.

It was decided to call out first the men of the key services—described by that fervent anti-militarist, Mr. John Bromley, as the “shock troops”. They included the railwaymen, the transport workers, the iron and steel workers, the building workers, the printers, and the electricity and gas workers. Instructions were given that health, food and sanitary services were not to be interfered with.

It was thus decided—but not so irrevocably decided that the General Council felt unable to refuse an invitation to confer with the Prime Minister. They talked to Mr. Baldwin for five hours. The conference ended with an ultimatum from the Council that, failing settlement of the mining dispute, the General Strike would begin at midnight on Monday, May 3. An hour or two later the Government countered with a Royal Proclamation declaring a State of Emergency. And yet neither the Labour leaders nor the public believed that the ultimatum was really ultimate—on Sunday morning the General Council set off again in pursuit of another talismanic “formula”. This time it was Lord

Birkenhead—probably a little astonished to find himself in the unfamiliar rôle of peacemaker—who suggested a compromise that might have led to a settlement, if only temporary, of the mining quarrel and the withdrawal of the owners' lock-out notices. Full of hope, the members of the General Council went to see the miners' leaders. They were still talking over the possibilities of the new plan as a basis for fresh negotiations when a message arrived from Downing Street for Mr. W. M. Citrine, the secretary of the Council, asking him to see Mr. Baldwin. He answered the summons in such haste that he found the Prime Minister was not ready for him, and the interview was deferred for an hour or so. When the secretary at length saw Mr. Baldwin he was handed a letter, and hurried back with it to the Council.

The message was read to the "thunderstruck" union committee. They had anticipated that the letter would contain the Cabinet's views on the new phase of the negotiations. But it declared all negotiations at an end.

The pretext for the rupture had been found in certain "overt acts" of trade union aggression, including "gross interference with the freedom of the Press". The Cabinet were indebted to the National Association of Operative Printers' Assistants, whose members had prevented the production of the Monday issues of the *Daily Mail* and the *Daily Mirror*. In the case of the *Mail* the men had demanded the withdrawal of a leading article headed, "For King and Country", and in that of the *Mirror* the objection was to a news article directing anti-strike volunteers to recruiting stations in the London area; in both cases the men's demands were refused and they stopped work. This foolish guerrilla exploit by an obscure union delivered several million workers into the hands of the militant Conservative section, and precipitated the worst debacle in the history of organized British labour. But the

"Natsopas" were merely following the fantastic lead given by the General Council when they included the printers among the "shock troops" of the Strike. None of the Council's blunders was more grievous than this one; the most virulent Press attacks could not have cost the unions as much public sympathy as did the attempt to suppress news: and it completely failed to silence Government propaganda—indeed, it enhanced the effectiveness of wireless broadcasting, which was Government-controlled, and it was responsible for the birth of the *British Gazette*, which, under the direction of Mr. Winston Churchill, was to prove the most powerful of strike-breaking weapons.

These things, however, had not yet been brought home to the General Council as they listened to their secretary reading Mr. Baldwin's letter. "The committee", according to Mr. Citrine's account, "were thunderstruck. We thought we would go and ask Mr. Baldwin for some explanation. To our amazement, when we reached the room it was empty. The Prime Minister and the Cabinet had all disappeared."

Parliament met on the Monday in a mood of gloomy hysteria. Mr. Baldwin's contribution to discussion of the crisis suggested a funeral sermon at a camp revival meeting, "Everything I care for most", he said, "is smashed to bits. We may, in this House, be full of strife to-day, but before long the Angel of Peace, with healing in his wings, will be with us again. When he comes may we be there to meet him. I shall pick up the bits and I shall start again."

Then Big Ben struck twelve. War had begun.

Little groups of people in every town and village who sat up far into the night, in the hope of hearing that at the last hour the calamity had been averted, went disappointed to bed. Tuesday's awakening was chilly with apprehension.

Even the War had brought no emergency quite as perplexing as this. Then, in the worst hours of storm,

we had all been in the same boat. But now one man woke up wondering how he was to reach the shop or factory where he earned his bread and butter, because his neighbour, who drove the bus or train or tram on which he depended, had “come out”. The air was heavily charged with general exasperation. For, on that first morning, it seemed that the unions had advanced decisively: the dislocation of transport was complete, and it seemed impossible that the millions of people who lived miles from their work could overcome the obstacles that the General Strike imposed. Mr. Justice Eve announced from the bench that his future attendance was doubtful, as he did not own a motor-car and did not intend to walk the seven miles that separated his home from the Law Courts. But that was not the temper of the majority. They meant to go to work, and most of them succeeded. The appearance of the General Council’s success wore thin very quickly. For the first, and most obvious, lesson of the Strike was that it inflicted no immediate personal hardship on the capitalists against whom it was directed—their chauffeurs did not belong to the Transport Workers’ Union—and it did inflict extreme discomfort on the majority of workers. The processions of tired men and women tramping homeward that evening were ominous. Londoners, far more than any others, suffered from the wide separation of dormitory and workshop, and at nightfall the approaches to the suburbs were strung with long columns of footsore and exasperated citizens.

Not that it was all discomfort. “Carrying on” in spite of the General Council was something of an adventure. It was an adventure for the “embattled Motorist-Middle-class advertising their useful intentions—carrying motorless clerks to wealthy offices”; an adventure, certainly, for the clerks and typists who were carried, and even those who were not had the proud consciousness of upholding the

Constitution against proletarian aggression. The shop assistant thrilled to Sir John Simon's affirmation that "You can wear out the shoes of the working girl, but you cannot wear out her spirit". The sense of a great emergency was in the air, there were a thousand rumours to be shuddered at, brave words to be mouthed against the "Bolshies", feats of enterprise and endurance to be boasted of—the interruption of daily dullness was not altogether a misfortune.

Was it, for example, surprising that when volunteers were needed in the machine-room of the *Morning Post* to man the presses for the issue of the *British Gazette* leaders, art critics, reporters and sub-editors should have given a "frolic welcome" to the call? Even an art critic, in borrowed dungarees, even a sub-editor was given the holiday illusion of useful service, with the comforting certainty that it *was* only a frolic, that the dungarees were not a permanent livery of servitude. Everyone who in nursery days had aspired to be an engine-driver—that is to say, everyone saw in the Strike an opportunity of fulfilling childhood dreams, and knew that the experience would not last long enough to become monotonous. It did not impose any hardship on the average undergraduate to drive a bus, or enjoy a patriotic lark in a tube lift. Fortunately, the exigencies of the hour did not call for volunteers to go down mines and hew coal. There was, as well, the stimulus of fear. Fear of revolution, fear for security (what would happen to investments?), fear of famine, fear of mob-violence—with the lack of newspapers every disorder was magnified by rumour.

The really effective opposition was based neither on frolic nor panic. Between, and above, these extremes was the solid resistance of people who felt, without bitterness and without hysteria, that the Government must be supported. They were not the dupes of propaganda, they did not mistake Ministers for selfless supermen, they probably considered

that, as between the original parties to the coal quarrel, the mine-owners were at least as pigheaded as the miners and deserved less sympathy, they did not lump four million of their countrymen together as bloody revolutionaries. But they were convinced that, imperfect as the House of Commons and the Conservative Cabinet—or any Cabinet—might be, they provided a closer approximation to democracy and reasonable liberty than anything that could emerge from a T.U.C. victory. An intemperate expression of this temperate attitude is to be found in Mr. Richard Aldington's opinion: "Since it is clear that robbers we must have, it is better to keep satiated and slightly conscience-stricken robbers than to make prodigious efforts in order to instal a set of hungry new ones whose 'idealism' will excuse any rapacity."

Behind a great deal of noisy and fatuous emotionalism was this substantial commonsense, and the bourgeoisie was welded into such a defensive solidarity as had not been known since the autumn of 1914, and was not to be known again until the autumn of 1931. Long before the volunteer recruiting depot at the Foreign Office opened on the day before the Strike the courtyard was filled by men and women waiting to enrol. Three hundred thousand were enlisted in the Volunteer Service Corps within a few days. Not all were the "embattled middle-class", for the Corps offered good pay and good food to unemployed men. From the beginning the strike-breaking machinery, elaborated by the Government since the compromise of ten months earlier, proved brilliantly effective. Hyde Park was transformed, between midnight on Sunday and Monday afternoon, into a vast centre for the distribution of milk; huts, sentry-boxes and telephone systems were erected, and nearly five hundred lorries were commandeered; the centre handled the supply of two million gallons of milk a day. So far from the fear of famine ever beginning to approach

reality, the only effect on food prices was an increase of twopence per quart in the price of milk in the London area.

By the second day of the Strike skeleton services were resumed on the Metropolitan Railway, and there were buses and even trams plying in London and several provincial cities; on the third day seventeen hundred trains were run, almost wholly by volunteer labour, and on the following day the number was increased by seven hundred. Side by side with officially organized effort there was a general improvization to meet the emergency; thousands of workers found hospitality near their work, and thousands of straphangers went to their offices in the luxury of limousines. Tweed-clad women in two-seaters patrolled the roads of Kensington and Bayswater, and in some parts of London the chief difficulty was to enjoy a stroll, so importunate were the offerers of "lifts".

On the other side there were four million men with nothing to do, men with a grievance, bitterly aware that their neighbours were ranged against them, aware, too, that they were muzzled, that every available resource of propaganda was being directed against them, and that they could make no reply. It would have been remarkable if the spectacle of the strike-breaking machine had not seemed provocative—although the feeding of themselves and their families depended on this very machine. They provided material for further propaganda by violent demonstrations. A motor convoy passing through Poplar was surrounded by a mob which destroyed one of the cars. Police made a baton charge on the crowd, and some people went to hospital. Others went to prison. There were other ugly incidents in the North, notably at Durham and at Edinburgh, where bus-drivers who continued at work were stoned until they abandoned their buses. Strikers at Deptford cut off for a time the electric light of a great hospital.

The close of the first day of the Strike was a night of deep discouragement for the General Council—no deeper discouragement than their ineptitude had earned, and not so deep as succeeding days were to bring. Next morning the Government produced a new and formidable weapon. On the previous evening the editor of the *Morning Post* had invited the Government to commandeer the offices and machinery of the paper for the production of an official news-sheet. "Only the extreme gravity of the situation", the *Morning Post* said later, "could have justified the innovation on the one side, and the self-effacement on the other." But the *British Gazette* required no other justification than its success; by the ninth and last day of its publication it had achieved a sale of more than two million copies. Except for *The Times*—in a very attenuated form—and the Continental edition of the *Daily Mail*, brought from Paris, London had no newspapers, so that the *British Gazette*, with a Cabinet Minister as editor, had virtually a clear field. It told the public as much of the truth as Mr. Winston Churchill considered good for it, and, for once, Mr. Churchill did not err on the side of excess. As a counter-stroke the T.U.C. issued the *British Worker*, but this was subject to Government censorship, so that the union leaders were in the position of a duellist who must hand over his pistol to his opponent to be unloaded before the combat begins.

There was, however, little need for the *Gazette* to invent propaganda. Strike violence was doing enough to frighten and anger the public, and the hardening of hostile sentiment incited the strikers to further outbreaks. London's worst disorders on the second day were at Camberwell, where motor-cars were attacked and two policemen were seriously injured. More police, and several civilians, were hurt in riots in Edinburgh, and at Leeds passengers in emergency cars were wounded by lumps of coal and flying glass.

The only real development in the Strike during the day was a minor success for the T.U.C. London taxi-drivers, to whom the absence of normal traffic had brought a rich harvest of fares, decided to join their fellow transport workers on strike—a sacrifice that was as futile as it was disinterested.

For the Government was justified when it claimed in the next morning's *British Gazette* that it was successfully maintaining the vital services of supply—food, light and power—and that communications by road and rail were improving steadily. The claim, backed by figures of food distributed and trains resumed, was immediately effective; in Liverpool, for example, all the workers at the electric power stations and seventy per cent. of the tramwaymen went back to duty, and in many provincial towns bus services were resumed. Side by side with surrender went angry despair; shops were looted in Edinburgh, a motor-bus was set on fire in South-East London, and fifty London General buses did not return to their depots that night; at Middlesbrough women and youths held up a train. An order was issued closing Downing Street to the public, and a message was broadcast begging the nation to disregard rumours of injury to a Cabinet Minister. In the hysterical tension of the time there were those who were prepared to believe that a Cabinet Minister was likely to expose himself to the risk of injury.

Earlier in the day Mr. Saklatvala, the Parsi Communist member of Parliament for Battersea, had been sentenced to two months' imprisonment as the result of an inflammatory speech. A protest by Mr. David Kirkwood against this "affront to the Commons" was not sympathetically received, but the House listened with great enthusiasm to the opinion of Sir John Simon that every worker who had left his employment without giving statutory notice was guilty of an unlawful act and could be proceeded against.

The Government had by this time tested its own powers of resistance and had found them adequate. The time had come to attack, and on the Friday the offensive was opened. First the *British Gazette* announced the situation was becoming graver—the Secret Service had discovered a new order by the General Council to the railway and transport unions, an order to “paralyse and break down the supply of food and the necessaries of life”. The reply to this “organized attempt to starve the people and to wreck the State” was that seven hundred more trains were run that day than on the previous day.

Mr. Baldwin followed up the *Gazette's* bombing raid with an extremely effective broadcast speech. “The Government is fighting because, while negotiations were in progress, the Trade Union Congress ordered a general strike, presumably to try to force Parliament and the nation to bend to its will,” he said. The humblest of his hearers was compensated for a week of alarms and discomforts—had not he, like the Prime Minister, refused to bend to coercion? “The Government”, Mr. Baldwin continued, “is not fighting to lower the standard of living of the miners. That suggestion is being spread abroad. It is not true. No honest person can doubt that my whole desire is to maintain the standard of living of every worker.” He issued a guarantee to every trade unionist who resumed work that his union benefits would be secured by legislation, in spite of any threats the unions or the Congress might utter.

The force of this guarantee lay in the fact that at least two-thirds of the four million strikers were fighting a battle in which their own wages and conditions were not at stake, an unpopular battle and a losing battle in which they were led by generals who obviously had no hope of victory.

The judicious simplicity of Mr. Baldwin's broadcast was reinforced by the sonorous solemnity of nineteenth-century

Liberalism—the voice of Lord Oxford. “The real victims of a general strike are what is called the common people. We should have lost all self-respect if we were to allow any section of the community, at its own will and for whatever motives, to bring to a standstill the industrial and social life of the nation. That would be to acquiesce in the substitution for Free Government of a Dictatorship. This the British People will never do.”

On the previous day the Government had refused permission for the broadcasting of an appeal by the Churches for a resumption of peace negotiations, although the appeal was backed by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Free Church leaders. Not only was permission to broadcast refused, but publication in the *British Gazette* was withheld, until attention was drawn to the matter in the House of Commons. Mr. Churchill then blandly explained that nobody had brought the document to his notice. In the meantime the Government had found a more acceptable expression of Christian opinion in Cardinal Bourne’s view that the strike was a “sin against God”. The Cardinal’s condemnation of the Trade Union Congress was given the widest possible publicity.

While the Government were advancing from strength to strength the General Council was floundering more and more hopelessly in ineffectiveness. They issued instructions designed to hamper the distribution of flour—and the same afternoon thousands of Londoners watched a military convoy two miles long bringing flour from the docks to Hyde Park. Armoured cars, steel-helmeted troops and several hundred volunteers assisted the impressiveness of the demonstration.

But if the Council’s strength was hardly as the strength of ten they could at least affirm that their hearts were pure. They ostentatiously refused a cheque for several thousand pounds offered by the Moscow International.

The beginning of the end came on the Sunday, when at a meeting at Hammersmith Mr. J. H. Thomas publicly repudiated the "principle of a General Strike". The General Strike cost the National Union of Railwaymen six million pounds, and there was never any question of immediate benefit to its members even if the Strike had succeeded. To support the miners they left their work, incurred heavy civil liability and jeopardized the security of their homes, believing that the solidarity of the great unions must prevail. Even when the surprising energy and completeness of the Government's counter-attack raised the first doubts as to the practical effectiveness of their action they were ready to fight the issue out as a matter of principle. And now their leader told them that they had been mistaken in principle, and that he had known it from the beginning. This was the final disillusionment. The more alert members of the belligerent unions were already aware of divisions within the General Council, so that Mr. Thomas's speech came as a sufficient indication that the Council was on the run. There was nothing left for the striker but the bitter prospect of going back, cap in hand, to beg for the job that he had been persuaded to leave.

There was not even any certainty that the surrender would be accepted. More than three hundred thousand volunteers had come forward, and the employer who had been left in the lurch might well decide to keep on the man who had come to his rescue and discard the unduly enthusiastic trade unionist.

When the seventh day of the Strike came complete and disastrous collapse appeared to be a matter of hours. Then, when the General Council had reached the last gasp of hope's latest breath, a deliverer appeared. Nothing, indeed, could deliver the unions from defeat, but the leaders were given a chance to save themselves from irreparable

discredit and their organizations from complete disruption, and they owed the chance to Sir Herbert Samuel. It is extremely doubtful whether during the week of conflict anybody had remembered the existence of the Coal Commission or its chairman—if they were remembered at all by the miners it was as the ruse whereby the Government, unprepared in 1925, had gained time for the fight of 1926. Sir Herbert now came to the General Council as a saviour, albeit an unofficial and self-appointed saviour. He had no mandate from the Cabinet, which, with victory in its grasp, was not looking for peace-makers, and seemed at first to regard Sir Herbert as a rather tiresome busybody; but to the General Council he was an angel of deliverance. For he brought a memorandum, a formula which could be regarded, for the moment, at any rate, as a solution of the mining dispute, and an avenue of retreat for the T.U.C.

How necessary it was to find such an avenue is underlined by the fact that while the General Council were opening their arms to Sir Herbert twelve thousand disillusioned Southern Railway men were reporting for duty, and in the lesser organized industries men were drifting back to work in hundreds. A further emphasis on the necessity for immediate peace was supplied by news from Durham of the most desperate outrage of the Strike, when miners at Cramlington tried to wreck the volunteer-driven Scottish Express.

Next day more strikers went back to work and the General Council announced that "the solidarity and enthusiasm of the men on strike is as great as ever". They then addressed themselves to persuading the miners' leaders to accept Sir Herbert Samuel's memorandum as a basis for settlement. Their eagerness for peace was considerably stimulated by the pronouncement of Mr. Justice Astbury that day that "the so-called General Strike is illegal, and those inciting or taking part in it are not protected by the Trade Disputes

Act of 1906". This declaration was made in an action brought by the National Sailors' and Firemen's Union to restrain a branch secretary from calling a strike without the authority of the executive, and thus the legality of the Strike was not the main issue before the court. But in the House of Commons the assertion of the illegality of the General Strike was repeated by Sir John Simon; that it was immediately challenged by an eminent lawyer on the Labour side, Sir Henry Slessor, and that it was in fact untenable, was beside the point at that hour of crisis and indecision. If Mr. Justice Astbury and Sir John Simon were right—and there was no time for argument—the unions were liable for incalculable damages. There was a hurriedly summoned meeting of the General Council with the object of "keeping the door open"—presumably the same door that was left ajar by Mr. Thomas in his Hammersmith speech.

On Wednesday, May 12, the General Council marched through the door to Downing Street and called off the strike unconditionally. The Miners' Federation had given them their excuse for surrender by refusing to accept the Samuel memorandum as a basis for fresh negotiations with the coal-owners. According to a report made later by Mr. John Bromley, "the General Council considered the situation too grave to justify their being tied to a mere slogan" (the miners' stipulation of "not a cent off the pay, not a minute on the day"). "The Samuel memorandum was an equitable basis of agreement. Yet the miners' leaders threw all this away and now it is very unlikely, after these weeks of starvation, the temporary smashing of British trade unionism and the victimization of thousands who tried to help them, whether the miners will get anything like what the General Council obtained in the Samuel memorandum." To this the miners' obvious retort was that the Samuel memorandum gave them exactly nothing, since it

was not an official offer, and there was no guarantee whatever that the Government would endorse it or the coal-owners accept it. A fortnight after the strike had ended three members of the T.U.C., Mr. Ernest Bevin, Mr. R. D. Walker, and Mr. Alan Finlay, professed surprise at the discovery that Sir Herbert had not come to the Council as an accredited emissary of the Cabinet. Rather melodramatically, they called upon him "to speak, and to speak without any reservation. . . . Facts must be made plain." Sir Herbert made the facts very plain. "So far as I know," he said, "the members of the Government were wholly unaware of the contents of the memorandum of May 12, or even that such a memorandum was under discussion until I presented a copy of it to the Prime Minister on the morning of that day, when the members of the T.U.C. Council were already on their way to Downing Street to announce the termination of the General Strike." As Sir Herbert had accompanied the memorandum with a letter to the Council in which he reminded them, "I have made it clear from the outset that I am acting entirely on my own initiative, have received no authority from the Government, and can give no assurances on their behalf," the suspicion of Mr. Bevin and his friends seems insubstantial.

The surrender was received magnanimously. "I thank God for your decision," Mr. Baldwin told the defeated leaders. His gratitude for their indecision was probably beyond expression.

The Strike was over. The T.U.C. sent out instructions to the men to return to work. Many of the men were heartily thankful for orders that restored them to the normal routine. Ten days in an attitude of proletarian heroism had meant a heavy strain, and they were glad enough to get back to the less exacting, if less dramatic, ways of workaday habit. That was not true of all, however. At

scores of strikers' meetings the surrender was denounced as a base betrayal. Many of the men, when they reported for duty, were told that they were not wanted, that they would have to wait until a resumption of work had been organized, or that they would have to accept less favourable conditions than they had worked under formerly. On the day after the calling off of the strike the Railway Managers' Association announced that "in the interests of the public, and to safeguard future peace and discipline on the railways", the companies would reserve any rights they possessed in the matter of taking back any man who had broken his contract. But the Association reckoned without Mr. Baldwin. "I am not out to smash trade unions," he said very firmly in the House of Commons, "and I will not allow the Strike to be made a pretext for the imposition of worse conditions." The railways hurriedly revised their ultimatum, and agreed to reinstate all their wayward workers, on condition that the men should admit that they had acted wrongly and should pledge themselves not to strike again without notice.

The wisdom, as well as the humanity, of Mr. Baldwin's refusal to allow vindictive action by the railways against the strikers was proved in cases where employers, who could not be so easily controlled, seized the opportunity to cut down their wages lists. At no time during the Strike was feeling more bitter on the men's side than in the days immediately following the Strike. There had been riots, picketing had been far from peaceful, scores of people had been injured, while the struggle was actually in progress, but not one life had been lost; the first fatal casualty occurred three days after peace was declared—a volunteer worker named Peachey was attacked as he was going home through the Rotherhithe Tunnel, and was so brutally handled that he died. This was the most serious of many attacks on volunteers. On the whole, however, physical violence was

a lesser evil of the conflict; broken heads could be patched up, but bruised wills and damaged faith took far longer to heal.

In Parliament the material injury was assessed by Ministers. On May 17 the Chancellor of the Exchequer said that the direct cost to the State for extra police, civil constabulary and other emergency services had not been more than £750,000, and he had no reason to suppose that additional taxation would be necessary as a result of the Strike. A day or two later the President of the Board of Trade estimated the indirect loss to trade to have been in the neighbourhood of thirty million pounds. Nobody suggested that the estimate was too high, and it was probably an understatement. One of the few satisfactory aspects of the Strike, on the material side, was that British currency had not been adversely influenced; in fact, the pound had slightly improved in relation to the dollar. The official figures of the cost of the Strike did not take into account the huge losses to trade union funds, nor the dissipation of workmen's savings.

And the most grievous and irreparable damage of all was beyond arithmetical reckoning. Trade union organization was crippled, and Parliament was given a pretext for depriving the unions of power to compel their members to contribute to political funds; trade union membership fell in a year from 5,209,000 to 4,918,000. This would not have been an occasion for tears, if it had affected only the leaders whose bungling had earned humiliation; it was deplorable because it reflected the disillusionment of thousands of men whose sadly exploited "solidarity" was not entirely a matter of self-interest, and whose "fighting spirit" was at any rate a nobler impulse than football fever or greyhound mania.

There were many reasons why the Strike was doomed to failure. One was that its leaders were fighting to lose. To have won, to have achieved a revolution, would have

been *felo-de-se*. The most they hoped for was a position of stalemate, from which they might retire in good order, with as few casualties as possible. They dared not hit too hard, while the Government was resolved upon a knock-out blow. But even if the General Council had been in earnest they could not have won. The resistance of the middle classes and of the millions of workers not committed to the Strike was too resolute, in the worst moments of anxiety there was never a hint of stampede. And there was a third cause of failure, so definite and decisive that it not only broke the General Strike but discredited all strikes—perhaps permanently. This proletarian weapon had been brandished many times, at last its edge had been fully tested, and with the test its terror had departed. The truth had appeared, that the “key” men, the “pivotal” workers, were not indispensable; society had sufficient reserve of industrial spare parts to keep the machinery going in an emergency; in a community that contained hundreds of thousands of owner-drivers there were hundreds of thousands of partly trained mechanics. The success of the amateur in May, 1926, struck decisively at the prestige and courage of the skilled workman.

As for the miners, the T.U.C. surrender left them to fight alone, and for half a year longer they held out with desperate, magnificent, lamentable courage. Then, at the end of November, they went back to work on the owners' terms. Labour's debacle was complete.

CHAPTER IX

MORALS IN THE MELTING POT

Liberty, what crimes are committed in thy name!

—MME ROLLAND.

War-Time Freedom—Woman after the War—Dr. Marie Stopes—Mrs. Christabel Russell—"The Bracing Sea of Sex"—Instinctive Satisfaction for All—The Double Standard and Divorce Reformers—Censorship—*The Well of Loneliness*—D. H. Lawrence's Pictures—The Case of Colonel Barker.

AFTER the collapse of the General Strike political conservatism was higher in prestige and authority than it had been for twenty years. For the first time since the Armistice Ministers were able to leave out of their calculations the possibility of revolution, which till then had been more or less remote but never absent. At least one Minister took advantage of the respite to seek fresh exercises in conservation. Sir William Joynson-Hicks had been foremost in the battle against political revolution; by his Arcos raid he had inflicted heavy damage on dangerous tolerance of the Soviet; he had rounded up the British Bolsheviks and had secured a judicial declaration that the Communist Party was an illegal organization; he was energetic and conscientious—or, alternatively, a busy-body; he held uncompromising religious opinions; and he was Secretary of State for Home Affairs, that is to say, the nearest approach that the British Constitution provides to a Minister for Morals. Liberated from the Red obsession, he turned to repel another attack on the established order.

That attack, the revaluation of sexual morality, had been in progress for years, and if "Jix" (he delighted in the nickname) was the first Home Secretary to face it, the cause was not merely that his predecessors had more urgent preoccupations, but that he had less discretion. Low Church zeal rushed in where angels had feared to tread.

One of the most obvious effects of the War upon social habits had been the relaxation of sexual conventions. As to that there was no argument, the "War babies" furnished living proof. It was deplorable, of course, but it was easily explained by the unbearable emotional tension of the time, the uncertainty of life, the sense of an emergency that exempted young men and young women from normal restraints. After the War (according to thoughtful forecasts) young people would settle down to obey, so far as the flesh allowed, the good old Victorian precepts. Up to a point this was a sound diagnosis and a reasonable prophecy. Wartime promiscuity was an escapade, rather than a revolt. It defied the rules, with the excuse of emergency, and did not deny them. The flapper and subaltern had their fling, but it was consciously reckless. The swing-of-the-pendulum reasoning which led elders to suppose that peace would restore formerly accepted standards might have been justified but for certain unpredictable changes in the terms of the moral equation.

The first change was fundamental, for it was practical and without it all changes of opinion would have remained mere talk. "The simple process of dissociating sex life from the philoprogenitive instinct was performed by the War Generation," to quote Mr. Richard Aldington. For the first time expert advice on contraception became readily available to every young man and woman, and Dr. Marie Stopes's manual on *Married Love* abolished a major risk of unmarried love. Until the economic penalty had been removed, the term "free love" was meaningless.

A further important change was the furious acceleration of feminist advance during, and because of, the War. Before the War the general characteristic of the feminist was that she was not quite feminine, but after the War all women were feminists by compulsion, whether they knew it or not. In the Coalition election manifesto Mr. Lloyd George undertook to remove all existing inequalities in law between men and women, and women voted for the first time to put the Coalition into power. Mr. Lloyd George did not fulfil his promise, but, under pressure from Labour, he redeemed part of it; in July, 1919, a Bill was passed providing that "no person should be disqualified by sex from the exercise of any public function, or from being appointed to any civil or judicial office or post, or from entering or resuming any profession or vocation". In December Lady Astor took her seat in the House of Commons as its first woman member. In the following year one hundred and ten women graduates were admitted to membership of the University of Oxford; in 1921 women made their first appearance as jurors in the High Court. Women were called to the Bar, were enrolled as solicitors, a woman was hanged (it was so long since this had happened that a revival appeared as an innovation), and women became auctioneers, surveyors, and successful architects. A few doors were still closed upon them, or were opened very grudgingly. As a peeress in her own right, Lady Rhondda made a spirited attempt to claim a seat in the House of Lords, but Lord Birkenhead and the Committee of Privileges defeated her. The Church still refused to ordain women as priests, and Stock Exchanges refused to elect them as members. A much graver development of "sex war" occurred in the great London hospitals. In 1928 King's College, Westminster, Charing Cross, London, and St. George's Hospitals, where women students were admitted, announced that they would admit no more.

The reimposition of sex inequality in one of the most important fields of professional training aroused intense indignation among women, and the reasons given for the hospitals' decision were not such as to appease angry feminists. It was stated that the men students had objected to the admission of women students on the grounds that (1) "The two sexes cannot mingle" in the study of medicine, (2) that women students interfered with athletics, (3) that they distracted the men from their studies, and (4) that women were not a success as doctors. The first three objections, as women pointed out, suggested the unfitness of the men for serious medical study, rather than the unfitness of women; and the fourth was interpreted as an expression of dread of competition and not a considered judgment. This was probably the most damaging reverse suffered by feminism since the War. But the reverses were trifling by comparison with the advances. Within two years of the hospitals' rebuff a London typist, Miss Amy Johnson, flew alone from England to Australia, Miss Winifred Brown won the King's air race round England, Miss Marjorie Foster won the King's Prize for rifle-shooting at Bisley, Miss Josephine Fielding wrote the Newdigate prize poem at Oxford, Miss Susan Lawrence, M.P., represented Great Britain at the League of Nations in Geneva. These were the achievements of a single year.

They were, of course, exceptional achievements. "These feminine exploits", says Miss Margaret Kornitzer in *Modern Woman and Herself*, "have not been evoked by feminine super-vitality in the same sense as pioneering, and pre-eminence in sport, and the sheer brilliance of such careers as Birkenhead's and Northcliffe's are evoked by masculine super-vitality. Outstanding careers, among women, are not apotheoses of a norm, not super-examples of what most women are doing in their humbler way."

And behind every generalization about the advance of women looms the fact that the advertiser of a "slimming" treatment still finds it expedient to solicit women's custom in such terms as, "It is, of course, an exaggeration to state that fat girls *never* win the men they love; but certain it is that most men, in this year of 'grace', *do* prefer a slender, winsome girl," and a depilatory is sold on the strength of "SHE WOULD HAVE BEEN MARRIED NOW . . . And She Never Knew Why He Changed." But obstinately as the old emotional imperatives may persist, they are profoundly affected by the new economic imperatives. Dr. Meyrick Booth has shown, in *Woman and Society*, how the economic factor works in the matter of marriage and the legendary "superfluous woman". It is a popular belief that about 2,000,000 women cannot get married because there is a shortage of men, but actually, says Dr. Booth, "there are well over 2,000,000 unmarried men of the best marriageable ages, and there are three to four million women doing men's work. It is the presence of this enormous mass of women workers which makes marriage impossible for so many women, by depriving their potential mates of jobs." The War intensified this condition by about thirty per cent., for by the end of 1918, it was estimated, 1,100,000 women had been added to the 3,276,000 employed in July, 1914.

Mr. Everyman, watching the beginnings of this revolution, was rather sceptical, a little scornful, but not seriously apprehensive. It was not danger, but inconvenience, that seemed to be the disadvantage of the new order. Somehow, masculine seclusion was more difficult to obtain than it had been. Women found their way into clubs and restaurants which had once been refuges against them. Above all, they found their way into the newspapers. Increasingly prodigal advertising by drapery firms and other sellers in search of women's custom was to a great extent

responsible for the feminization of news. A crowning instance of the headline bias in favour of women occurred when Miss Amelia Earhart crossed the Atlantic in an aeroplane piloted and navigated by men; the "splash" stories conveyed the impression that "Lady Lindy" had made a solo flight. As Miss Earhart has a sensitive conscience, she was put to the trouble of actually making an Atlantic flight alone, in order to earn the kudos that had been thrust upon her. The grotesque exaggeration of "woman interest" to a large extent defeats itself by excess; many women must react in the same way as Mr. Robert Graves tells us his wife did: "It came to the point when she could not bear a newspaper in the house. She was afraid of coming across something that would horrify her, some paragraph about . . . women's intelligence, or about the modern girl, or anything at all about women written by a clergyman."

Naturally, and illogically, most men assumed that the new woman would be womanly in the same mode as the old. One of the first emphatic and general intimations of his mistake was provided by the Russell case—or series of cases. Lord Ampthill's heir, the Hon. John Russell, brought a suit for divorce in which he accused Mrs. Christabel Russell of adultery with several co-respondents. The vital issue in the case was the paternity of Mrs. Russell's child, which Mr. Russell repudiated. This dispute involved the discussion, in the witness-box, by Mr. Russell and then by his wife of the most intimate details of their physical relationship, and the length to which newspaper reports of this evidence were carried was one of the principal causes of legislation to restrict reports of divorce proceedings.

Mrs. Russell's defence was one which would have astonished any pre-War jury. She admitted that she had ignored her husband's wishes by opening a dress-

making business, and that she had accepted a loan of money from another man to launch the business. She admitted visiting Murray's dance club with men when her husband was not of the party, and she admitted that she had danced "cheek to cheek" with her partners—that happened to be the fashionable way of dancing at the time, she explained. She admitted having been alone with young men in places and at times that a few years earlier would have been regarded, without further corroboration, as sufficient evidence of guilty intimacy. She discussed the physiological details on which the case depended with far greater composure than the counsel, Sir John Simon, who cross-examined her. Sir John seemed to be nonplussed by this witness. He challenged her on point after point of her behaviour, evidently expecting to be met with prevarication and denial. But Mrs. Russell did not define indiscretion in the same terms as Sir John Simon, and as she was not ashamed of her freedom there was no reason why she should lie about it.

At the first trial the jury disagreed, and all the correspondents were dismissed from the suit. Mr. Russell brought a second suit, naming a new co-respondent, and obtained a curious verdict; the jury exonerated the co-respondent named, but found that Mrs. Russell had committed adultery with a man unknown. An appeal, on a point of law, followed and was dismissed, and the matter was then taken to the House of Lords. By a majority, which included Lord Birkenhead, the Lords allowed the appeal, and ordered a third trial. Mr. Russell, however, carried the matter no further.

The moral drawn from this *cause célèbre* by Mr. and Mrs. Everyman took into account much more than the dispute about facts. This was recognized by Mr. James Douglas in a newspaper rhapsody on the Lords' decision—a judgment, he said, that indicated the new freedoms of woman.

He saluted Mrs. Russell as the typical “modern girl”—“her virtue is neither fugitive nor cloistered”. He proclaimed that—

“Freedom begets reverence rather than rascality. . . . I am convinced that the lot of a boy or a girl to-day is far more wholesome than it was in the Victorian hothouse. . . . Our young people are able to face the realities of sex without a stealthy snigger or a furtive leer. . . . Where woman is free man is reverent, and where man is reverent woman is adorable. . . . She can swim in the bracing sea of sex without being drowned.”

As will be seen later Mr. Douglas appears subsequently to have modified his approval of mixed bathing in the bracing sea of sex.

But Mrs. Russell, although she had drawn public attention to certain new idioms in contemporary youthfulness, was no moral revolutionary. She insisted on her sexual orthodoxy. In fact, there was an amusing parallel to be found between Mrs. Russell’s casual attitude toward the superficial conventions and her respect for the ultimate dogmas, and the precisely similar attitude of a “modern girl” of the nineties, Mrs. Asquith, whose memoirs were published just before the Russell case came before the courts. It was impossible for Mrs. Russell to be more candid about her flirtations than “Margot” was about hers—the only difference being that Mrs. Asquith volunteered her information in return for royalties, while Mrs. Russell made admissions in public under the pressure of necessity.

It is to another Mrs. Russell—Dora, the wife of Mr. Bertrand Russell—that we must look for a fuller affirmation of the new freedoms of women. In *Hypatia, or the Future of Marriage*, published in 1925, she indicated her

opinion that marriage, as Mrs. Christabel Russell and Mrs. Asquith accepted it, had a very thin future indeed.

"Sex," said Mrs. Dora Russell, "even without children and without marriage, is to our modern Aspasia a thing of dignity, beauty and delight. . . . Polygamy is no solution when we are polyandrous. . . . There are as many types of lover among women of all classes as among men. . . . Nothing but honesty and freedom will make instinctive satisfaction possible for all. . . . It would not be wrong for a man to have six wives, provided he and they all found mutual happiness in the arrangement, nor *vice versa*."

The *Sunday Express*, in which had appeared Mr. Douglas's recommendation of sex-bathing, considered that the author of *Hypatia* had got out of her depth; it described the book as "pernicious rubbish" and urged that it should be withdrawn.

But *Hypatia* was not withdrawn. For this was 1925 and the old prohibitions were not merely no longer effective—they never had been fully effective—but they were no longer regarded as ideally final or desirable. It is improbable that many young women were stirred by the prospect of a form of marriage that would permit one husband to have six wives. But there were astonishingly many who were prepared to agree that sex without marriage was a thing of delight—or, as Mr. A. Corbett-Smith, a popular lecturer, expressed it, "There never was, nor, I am convinced, can ever be any God-given, spiritual law against a gesture of physical intimacy between a free man and a free woman that does no hurt to themselves or to any other human creature."

There had been advocates of free love before, but never before were there so many people ready to listen without protest to their arguments, never so many eager to applaud

their proclamations. It is important by the way, to distinguish between the serious young people who accepted the new morality, and the Bright Young People, whose collapse into a new amorality has already been noted, and to whom panegyrics of the beauty and dignity of sex seemed "too bogus".

Both Mrs. Christabel Russell and Mrs. Dora Russell were very significantly products of their time. Because of the new development of opportunity for women, as reflected in the bill for the removal of sex disqualification, Mrs. Christabel Russell was able to disregard her husband's wishes, to establish her dressmaker's shop, in a fashion that would have been virtually impossible for a young woman of her class a generation earlier; to quote Mr. Douglas again, she was not "forced to beg for a matrimonial almshouse". And Mrs. Dora Russell's experimental approach to instinctive satisfaction for all would have meant chaos unless it were supported by contraception for all.

By this time it had become apparent that a sex inequality not taken into account by the Coalition Government's legislation was being levelled out by women themselves—the inequality of the "Double Standard" of morality. It was no longer admitted that young men should be forgiven a certain degree of sexual adventurousness, the traditional sowing of wild oats, while women were allowed no adventures at all, unless they belonged to the specialized outcast group that had to exist to make the wild oats system workable. There were, of course, two ways in which the Double Standard could be converted into a single standard—by restricting the adventurousness of men, or by increasing the freedom of women. As women's freedom in almost every other field of activity was being enlarged, it was natural that the Double Standard should have been attacked mainly along that line. Something, indeed, was

done to discourage male promiscuity—already taxed by maintenance orders and alimony—by a divorce law amendment which removed a discrepancy in the risks of adultery. It had been necessary for a wife, seeking divorce, to prove cruelty or desertion by her husband as well as adultery, while a petitioning husband was required to prove adultery only. After long debate Parliament agreed to make the single ground of adultery sufficient in both cases.

Years later, in 1931, Parliament was unable to bring itself to accept the recommendation of a Royal Commission on Divorce Reform that marriage should be dissoluble when one partner is incurably insane and has been continuously certified as a lunatic for five years. A bill to legalize the recommendation was defeated by 148 votes to 114. Earlier attempts to legalize divorce in cases where one partner had been certified as a criminal lunatic or had been imprisoned after a commuted death sentence were equally unsuccessful, although the argument in favour of making criminal lunacy a ground was reinforced by a tragic and topical example—that of Mrs. Rutherford, whose husband was sent to Broadmoor for the murder of Major Seton. Mrs. Rutherford petitioned for divorce on the conventional grounds, but there was not sufficient proof of adultery to free her from her bond to a homicidal maniac. Again and again during the decade Mr. Lloyd George's dictum that "Democracies are not nearly as timid as their leaders" was shown to apply to morals. While there was no doubt of a more boldly experimental attitude towards morals on the part of millions of individuals, supposedly representative bodies, religious and secular, moved with fearful slowness, or did not move at all. In 1926 the House of Commons, by 167 votes to 81, refused to sanction contraceptive instruction in Welfare centres. Two years later bureaucracy took the step at which Parliament had shied; the Ministry of Health issued a circular

to local authorities permitting them to give the forbidden education.

How far the Church of England was prepared to contribute to the discussion of moral unrest is indicated by a comment made, with no ironical intention, when in 1930 the Bishops at last braced themselves to the task: *The Times* said: "To include the subject of sex in the programme of the Lambeth Conference required no little courage." The courage did not go very far in the debates, though members of the Church were given eventually guarded permission to use contraceptive appliances, so long as they were used "in the light of Christian principles". The Roman Catholics made no such compromise. In 1929 Cardinal Bourne reaffirmed the absolute prohibition of birth control, "because it is wrong with an initial fundamental wrongness, antecedent to any ecclesiastical law or tradition".

A valiant attempt to perpetuate the moral *status quo ante bellum* was made by the University of Cambridge in depriving Mr. J. B. S. Haldane of his readership in biology because he had been co-respondent in a divorce suit. Alas for the ancient integrity of academic institutions! Mr. Haldane took the matter to a court of "judges designate", which decided that adultery did not necessarily imply "gross immorality". So Mr. Haldane was reinstated.

Long before "Jix" intervened to confer Cabinet authority on Puritanism there had been exciting skirmishes between the forces of freedom and the defenders of tabu. Unexpected declarations of allegiance were made on both sides. For example, it was not surprising that the verbal latitude of *Ulysses* should have been denounced by a London newspaper in 1922, but it did seem a little odd that the rebuke should come from the *Sporting Times*, and in such terms as these:

"He has ruled out all the elementary decencies of life, and dwells appreciatively on things that sniggering

schoolboys guffaw about . . . appears to have been written by a perverted lunatic who has made a speciality of the literature of the latrine . . . written in the manner of a demented George Meredith . . . a coarse salacrité (*sic*) intended for humour. . . . In his more delicate moments James Joyce imitates George Moore, and writes sentimentally about pale young girls and their under-clothing. . . . The main contents of the book are enough to make a Hottentot sick. *Ulysses* would have been boycotted in the palmiest days of Holywell Street."

Hardly less impressive than the "Pink Un's" championship of purity was Mr. Horatio Bottomley's demand for the suppression of a Lawrence novel, *Women in Love*, or Mr. James Douglas's excitement over the enormities of Mr. Aldous Huxley's *Antic Hay*. "Ordure and Blasphemy" was the heading of a review which described Mr. Huxley as a "hog of genius" and "a blowfly". Mr. Douglas shuddered at the prospect of "herds of literary rats exploring every sewer. The craft of letters will be debased and degraded until literature becomes a synonym for bad smells and bad drains."

Over the stage, as well, the dust of battle swirled, for the playwrights who responded so sympathetically to the peculiar needs of the Bright Young People stirred up picturesque panic in older playgoers. The *Sunday Express* discovered a social peril in Mr. Somerset Maugham's power to grace "decadence and hedonism" with "all the wealth of his wit and fancy" and warned its readers that "Mr. Noel Coward excites and titillates by shovelling up the ordure of an unprincipled smart set, exposing their nasty souls, bedizening their ugly manners, while the audience revels in a pandemonium of laxity". After that there was slender reassurance in Miss Fay Compton's prediction that the stage would soon return to "sweetness

and light—and real reality”. There were few signs of such a return even though a “Clean-the-Stage Campaign” was headed by the Bishop of London: the Bishop’s committee achieved little beyond the ventilation of their views—for instance, that it was “an outrage on good manners to depict the preliminaries of an outrage on a woman in a public performance”, as, they complained, the former Attorney-General, Sir Patrick Hastings, had done in *Scotch Mist*; but the Lord Chamberlain rejected their request that he should withdraw the licence for the play.

Worse was in store. When Mr. Miles Malleson’s “*The Fanatics*” was produced in 1927, Mr. Hannen Swaffer affirmed its “epoch-making” character as “the frankest modern play”. Some time earlier, on the appearance of *The Fanatics* in book form, a reviewer had wondered whether the theatre would be burned down when the play was produced; but all that happened on the first night was that a woman walked out of the auditorium in protest. Besides introducing discussions of birth control and trial marriage, the play indicted militarism, capitalism and the Church, so that the acquiescence of the rest of the audience was an interesting display of the degree of tolerance that London playgoers had by then reached. “*The Fanatics*” raised once again the problem, raised so many times in the recent history, of the psychology of stage censorship. Mr. Malleson had described four love affairs of an unmarried woman. The censor was willing to concede three *liaisons*, but four was one too many.

The tide of frankness had run strongly, then, when the Home Secretary decided that it was time to assume the rôle of Canute. As has been said, Sir William Joynson-Hicks had a lively sense of duty, and in this matter he had no doubt what his duty was. “The Government has a general responsibility”, he said, “for the moral welfare of the community, which is traceable partly perhaps to

the peculiar relationship existing between the Church and the State, and partly also to the duty inherent in all Governments of combating such dangers as threaten the safety or well-being of the State." It might have occurred to a man of suppler mind that there were peculiar difficulties in applying this principle at a time when "the community" was very clearly divided in opinion as to what its moral welfare really involved. But Sir William could not, or would not, see that the stocktaking of morals which was being carried on around him, and which was producing profound modifications in the vital attitudes of millions of men and women, was of any real importance. He accepted, as a final statement of the moral issue, the dictum of Cardinal Bourne: "The writers of books, the painters of pictures, the actors on the stage or for the screen, the women by the fashion of their dress, who render self-control more difficult for the average normal man or woman, and who, thereby, make the natural craving for sinful self-gratification more imperious than it would otherwise be, are committing moral evil."

"The bracing sea of sex". . . "Sex without marriage—a thing of dignity, beauty and delight". . . "The natural craving for sinful self-gratification." There was conflict in the air.

It was not, however, on the issue of censorship that the first controversy in regard to Government responsibility for public morals arose. In January, 1926, Sir Basil Thomson, who had been chief of the Secret Service during the War, and had only recently retired from the assistant commissionership of the Metropolitan Police, was fined at Marlborough Street police court for having committed an act in violation of public decency in Hyde Park. The case evoked memories of a similar charge against Sir Almeric Fitzroy, secretary to the Privy Council, four years earlier—Sir Almeric was convicted by a police magistrate of

"annoying" women in the Park, but succeeded in an appeal to the London Sessions—and the question of "Hyde Park Scandals" was revived in an acute form by the prosecution of Sir Leo Chiozza Money in 1928.

Sir Leo and a Miss Irene Savage—a young woman of unquestioned respectability—were sitting in the Park one evening, discussing industrial economics, when two constables in plain clothes marched them off to a police station and charged them with behaviour likely to offend against decency. Although witnesses were available, the police made no attempt to secure corroborative evidence. After Sir Leo and Miss Savage had endured the indignity of two appearances in court the charge was dismissed. The methods used by the police in interrogating Miss Savage led to public inquiry and a drastic revision of the rules for such procedure.

There was something intensely repugnant to public feeling in the employment of policemen as spies on the furtive improprieties of the Park, and the evidence on which charges were based was frequently of the most dubious kind. In several cases it was suggested that prostitutes had been coerced to testify by policemen in search of convictions and promotion, and in others there was strong suspicion that the police were the unwitting instruments of blackmail. It seemed possible that the price of preserving the moral tone of the Park was too high. To criticism of this sort the Home Secretary replied, "Hyde Park is paid for by Churchmen, Nonconformists and Roman Catholics, by decent-minded men and women in all classes of society. . . . If the police were to cease for forty-eight hours to patrol and enforce public decency in our parks, they would become places where it would be impossible for a man to take his daughters for a walk." Nevertheless, police activity in Hyde Park was curtailed as consequence of the protests.

More serious issues were to be raised by the Home Secretary's determination to protect the community from the dangers of its own moral revaluations. The protagonists in the first episode of a series that continued after Sir William Joynson-Hicks had been deprived of his office by the 1929 election, were Miss Radclyffe Hall, Mr. James Douglas, Sir Chartres Biron, and "Jix" himself. It is improbable that Miss Hall's solemnly sentimental novel, *The Well of Loneliness*, would have attracted wide attention without Mr. Douglas's assistance; it might have been designed as a warning against the humourless, self-pitying embarrassment of female homosexuality. But the force of its impact on Mr. Douglas was in inverse ratio to the dullness of the book. He cried out against this "intolerable outrage, the first outrage of its kind in the annals of English fiction". It was "unutterable putrefaction"—but not beyond Mr. Douglas's powers of utterance, for he continued:

"Decadent apostles of the most hideous and most loathsome vices no longer conceal their degeneracy and degradation. . . . This pestilence is devouring the younger generation, wrecking young lives, defiling young souls . . . a seductive and insidious piece of special pleading, designed to display perverted decadence as a martyrdom inflicted upon outcasts by a cruel society."

He appealed to the Churches to defend Christianity against Miss Hall. He called upon the publishers to withdraw the book. He invoked the law. He became homicidal in indignation—"I would rather give a healthy boy or girl prussic acid than this novel."

As a result of this outburst the publisher, Mr. Jonathan Cape, sent *The Well of Loneliness* to the Home Office to obtain official advice as to its morality. The Home Secretary replied that the book infringed the law, and Mr.

Cape immediately withdrew it from publication. Miss Hall was not prepared to accept the suppression of her novel in this way, and took steps to have it brought out by another publisher. Summonses were issued, and the chief magistrate at Bow Street, Sir Chartres Biron, ordered all copies of the book to be destroyed, on the ground of obscenity.

It was urged in defence of *The Well of Loneliness* that it was a serious and able study of an urgent social problem, but Sir Chartres declined to admit evidence by distinguished writers as to Miss Hall's conscientiousness and competence. "The proposition that this book is well written, and therefore should not be the subject of these proceedings is quite untenable," he said. It was not even relevant that the book contained no "gross or filthy words".

Since, on the hostile testimony of Mr. Douglas's review, Miss Hall had depicted the life of the Lesbian as a martyrdom, her novel hardly appeared as propaganda for perversion. But, in the police court, homosexuality was an obscene subject, and therefore it followed—in the admirable simplicity of the law—that a novel concerning homosexuality must be obscene. The book's most vociferous enemy had said that sexual aberrations were "wrecking young lives", yet this evident social peril was not a permissible subject for a serious novelist. These were some of the reflections that *The Well of Loneliness* prosecution aroused, and it was not surprising that their expression drove the Home Secretary to the defensive. In an article in the *Nineteenth Century* he explained that the chastity of the law was proof against æsthetic blandishments.

"Let it be remembered that the publishing of an obscene book, the issue of an obscene postcard or pornographic photograph—are all offences against the law of the land, and the Secretary of State, who is the general

authority for the maintenance of law and order, most clearly and definitely cannot discriminate between one offence and another in the discharge of his duty."

But in the same article he wrote:

"I agree that, if the law were pushed to its logical conclusion, the printing and publication of such books as *The Decameron*, Benvenuto Cellini's *Life*, and Burton's *Arabian Nights* might form the subject of proceedings. But the ultimate sanction of all law is public opinion, and I do not believe for one moment that prosecution in respect of books that have been in circulation for many centuries would command public support."

As D. H. Lawrence gleefully pointed out, in an answering pamphlet, "Jix" most clearly and definitely *did* discriminate between one obscene book and another in the discharge of his duty.

"The ultimate sanction of all law is public opinion." Comment on *The Well of Loneliness* affair, and on the suppression a little later of Miss Norah James's novel *Sleeveless Errand*, showed clearly that an important body of opinion was unwilling to sanction a censorship that depended on the Home Secretary's powers of discrimination. Irritation and alarm were increased by news that manuscript poems by D. H. Lawrence had been intercepted on their way by post to the publisher. But it was not until a Labour Home Secretary had succeeded "Jix" in office that the *reductio ad absurdum* of censorship was attained.

Two police officers, an inspector and a sergeant, visited the Warren Gallery, in Mayfair, where a collection of D. H. Lawrence's paintings was on exhibition. They disapproved so strongly of what they saw—though not on æsthetic grounds, which would have been excusable—that they returned later in the day and seized thirteen

paintings, as well as four books of reproductions of the pictures.

Two other books came under the officers' suspicion. One contained reproductions of pencil drawings by William Blake, and the inspector put it aside for seizure. When it was pointed out to him that Blake had been dead for nearly a century, and had in the interval acquired a high reputation as a draughtsman, he changed his mind. The other book, Louis Aragon's translation of *The Hunting of the Snark*, was naturally suspect, since it was in the immoral French language. When it was explained to the inspector that the book was a children's classic, he observed that he had never heard of it. This ended the case against the Snark.

The case against Mr. and Mrs. Philip Trotter, the proprietors of the gallery, was heard by Mr. Mead at Marlborough Street police court. The summons had been issued under the Obscene Publications Act of 1857, and it was announced that the police had acted in consequence of representations by what they called the "reputable" Press and complaints from individuals. The prosecution submitted that the thirteen pictures were "gross, coarse, hideous, unlovely, free from any æsthetic or artistic point of view, and in their nature obscene". In all of them "the private parts of male and female were depicted as largely and grossly and unnecessarily developed, with the pubic hair exposed". They were "horrible and filthy productions".

The defence pointed out that some of the pictures had been bought by "reputable people", and if they were destroyed intricate legal questions might arise. Mr. Mead replied that he could not take into consideration the contractual obligations of the defendants—if the pictures were obscene it was just as bad to exhibit them in a private house as in a public place. "Any man", he observed,

"can keep a collection of obscene pictures or books and thus corrupt youthful persons who may be privileged to visit him." If the pictures were obscene they should be "put an end to, like any wild animal which may be dangerous".

"It is utterly immaterial", Mr. Mead continued, "whether they are works of art or not. The most splendidly painted picture in the universe might be obscene."

A further observation of considerable interest by Mr. Mead arose from a reference by the defending barrister to the "great details of the human form" in the panels in the Vatican church. "I have been there and also in the Dulwich Gallery," said Mr. Mead, "and my feelings were never affected."

Mr. Mead indicated that he was not prepared to hear the evidence of such persons as Mr. Augustus John, Sir William Orpen, Mr. Glyn Philpot and Mr. Arnold Bennett—all of whom the defence wished to call—as to whether the pictures were works of art or not. Finally a settlement was arranged whereby the pictures were to be returned to Mr. and Mrs. Trotter, on their undertaking not to exhibit them.

By the adjournment of the summons *sine die*, at least two very important questions were left unsettled. This was the first instance in which a prosecution for obscenity had ever been brought in respect of pictures exhibited in an art gallery, and if this extension of censorship had been accepted by the magistrate, its justification would almost certainly have been tested in a higher court. There would have been an opportunity for discussion of the methods employed, which, it should be noted, differed materially from those of the book censorship. The absurdities committed by the police officers who made the raid—the blunders over Blake and the Snark—do not reflect on the inspector and the sergeant, but on their superiors, who

sent them on a job for which they were not equipped. As Lawrence himself said, "When the police raided my picture show, they did not in the least know what to take. So they took every picture where the smallest bit of the sex organ of either man or woman showed." What else could policemen do?

Then there was Mr. Mead's observation that it was just as bad to exhibit the obscene pictures in a private house as in public, because they might be used to "corrupt youthful persons". If this had any weight it meant that the Government's "responsibility for the moral welfare of the community" entitled it to send agents into private houses to estimate the corrupting potentialities of the pictures on the walls.

Were Lawrence's pictures obscene? We shall never know, for Mr. Mead did not deliver judgment upon them. We do know, however, that Lawrence's novel, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, is obscene, for that has been decided by the Customs, and all copies arriving in the country are liable to confiscation. Here is a form of censorship that persists, irresponsibly, and far more mischievously than magisterial process, for the publicity of the courts, the British distrust of censorships, and the certainty of indiscretion being subjected to severe criticism, have a restraining influence on the police, while it is only in very exceptional cases that the Customs officer is called to account. One of the many anomalies of the system is that, while four hundred and ninety-nine copies—every copy but one of the second printing—of *Ulysses* were seized at Folkestone and destroyed in 1923, a copy of the book was included in the catalogue of the library of Lord Birkenhead, who, as Lord Chancellor, was the chief representative of the Law in England.

Lady Chatterley's Lover, a moral tract rather than a novel, was written by Lawrence in the belief that the prime

spiritual necessity was to "realize sex", that youth was still hampered—in spite of the many Douglas-shocking books—by incomplete knowledge. In his preface he supported this argument by citing a case that was then—in 1929—the talk of England.

"When we read of the case of Colonel Barker, we see what is the matter. Colonel Barker was a woman who masqueraded as a man. The 'Colonel' married a wife, and lived five years with her in 'conjugal happiness'. And the poor wife thought all the time she was married normally and happily to a real husband. The revelation at the end is beyond all thought cruel for the poor woman. The situation is monstrous. Yet there are thousands of women to-day who might be so deceived, and go on being deceived."

The "monstrous situation" began to develop, it seems, in 1922, when a person dressed as a land girl became a customer at a chemist's shop in Littlehampton. Mr. Haward, the chemist, became friendly with the customer, and heard a very curious story. The land girl, it seemed, was no land girl, but Sir Leslie Ivor Victor Gauntlett Bligh Barker, baronet. He explained that his father, Sir Victor Barker, had died some years before, and that it was at his mother's wish that he was masquerading as a woman. Shortly after this introduction Barker took to male clothing, in which his robust figure showed to greater advantage than it had done in the land girl's smock. His good looks and his romantic history took the fancy of the chemist's daughter, who may also have been attracted by the possibility of becoming Lady Barker. The baronet, however, did not care to use his title, preferring to be known as Colonel, the rank he had held during the War. Eventually, when Mr. and Mrs. Haward were away on holiday, the Colonel and Miss Haward went off to Brighton together

—laxity of post-War conventions had a great deal to answer for—and stayed at an hotel as husband and wife. The girl's parents, however, did not hold post-War views of the permissibility of seaside excursions of this kind, and when they returned and discovered what had happened there were reproaches and expostulations, and Mr. Haward insisted that Colonel Barker should repair the damage to his daughter's reputation.

The marriage took place at St. Peter's Church, Brighton, and Colonel Barker set to work to cope with his new responsibilities. He was very adaptable; beginning with a six months' engagement as an actor in Brighton, he passed to antique-dealing at Andover, chicken-farming at Weyhill, acting again, working on fruit and dairy farms, and managing dog-kennels, all in the space of two years. Sometimes he prospered, but seldom for very long. In his Andover days he hunted with the Tidworth and played cricket for the local club, and on the whole got on well with his neighbours, in spite of his tendency to bore them with reminiscences of his days in the 17th Lancers. This sabre-rattling idiosyncrasy, however, was an asset to him as secretary to the president of the National Fascisti, which he became in 1925. Apart from his executive duties, the Colonel was always ready to turn out with "the boys" for a raid on Bolshie orators in Hyde Park, always ready to put on the gloves for a spar, and more than ready to appear on any ceremonial parade with a breastful of medals, including his D.S.O., pinned to his jacket. His prosperity increased, he opened a restaurant near Leicester-square, he engaged a valet and rented a flat in Mayfair—but it was not with his wife that he shared it, for in 1927 he left her for another woman.

There were more serious complications of Barker's life, however, about that time he was arrested on a charge of having uttered a forged document—a certificate supposed

to authorize him to carry firearms. Captain Barker (there was always a certain vagueness and interchangeability about the prefixes, "Sir Victor", "Colonel" or "Captain") made his first appearance in the dock at the Old Bailey in circumstances that attracted sympathetic attention. His eyes bandaged, he was led into court by a friend, and it was explained that he had suffered temporary blindness owing to War wounds, and that the trouble had been brought on again by the nervous strain of his present difficulties. The jury took the most compassionate view possible of the carelessness that had involved Captain Barker in a criminal charge, and he was acquitted.

Captain Barker soon recovered his status of "Colonel in his Majesty's Army, retired". That was the designation given in an affidavit, signed "Leslie Ivor Victor Gauntlett Bligh Barker", which he made in connexion with an action brought against him by a widow named Mrs. Maud Roper Johnson for the recovery of three hundred pounds. The action never came to trial, but there were other difficulties. His restaurant in Litchfield Street did not pay. A receiving order in bankruptcy was made against him, and as he did not appear for examination the Official Receiver issued a warrant for his arrest. A tipstaff went to the Regent Palace Hotel, where Barker was then employed as a reception clerk, and took him into custody on February 28, 1929.

That was the end of Colonel—or Captain—Sir Leslie Ivor Victor Gauntlett Bligh Barker. It was Lilius Arkell-Smith, a tall, heavily built woman of singularly masculine appearance who was brought up at Bow Street, charged with having falsely sworn an affidavit in the name of Victor Barker. In the police court and later at the Old Bailey her record was pieced together. It told of her marriage in April, 1918, to an Australian officer, Harold Arkell-Smith. According to her own story this man drank



'COLONEL' BARKER

heavily, and her marriage was very unhappy. She left him and lived with another Australian, to whom she bore two children. This man, too, she said, was a drunkard and used to beat her, and her second attempt to accommodate herself to the normal destiny of her sex failed. It was then that she went to Littlehampton, and the seven years' masquerade began. Her counsel, Sir Henry Curtis-Bennett, urged in extenuation that she had taken this way of escape because the masculine uncouthness of her body made her appear ridiculous in woman's clothing; she was stared at wherever she went. Once she had begun the deception circumstances made it impossible for her to abandon it; Mr. Haward's insistence on marriage, after the Brighton escapade, had trapped her. Miss Haward gave evidence that she did not know, until she read it in the newspapers after the arrest, that her husband was a woman.

It is impossible to get round the facts of Mrs. Arkell-Smith's dishonesty, and the deception of the untutored Miss Haward was, indeed, "beyond all thought cruel". The Recorder, who sentenced Colonel Barker to nine months in the second division, told her that she was "an unprincipled, mendacious and unscrupulous adventuress", who had "profaned the House of God, outraged the decencies of nature, and broken the laws of man". But many people, less secure than the Recorder in a sense of righteousness, felt that this outcast of sex had something pitiable as well as blameworthy in her plight, and agreed with Lawrence that some responsibility rested on the moral orthodoxy that made her deception possible. Miss Haward seemed to be as much the victim of her own "careful" upbringing as of the Colonel's lies.

Colonel Barker's notoriety went round the world. Only passing attention was given to an incident in the summer of 1927 that forms a foil to Mrs. Arkell-Smith's exploit.

As she had demonstrated the unsophistication of some contemporary young women, so this demonstrated, though by no means so convincingly, the lack of enterprise of some contemporary young men. An attractively dressed young woman of unusual height who appeared in Somerset was found to be the Reverend Harold Read, Congregational minister at Curry Rivel. Mr. Read, a married man with several grown-up children, was challenged in a country lane late at night by two fellow-townsmen who demanded to know what he meant by going about frightening girls. They had misunderstood his intentions, which, he later explained at some length, were "purely chivalrous". He had heard so much about the moral degeneracy of the age that he wished to test it by exposing himself to the perils said to encompass young women. And the age had stood the trial unexpectedly well—he was glad to say that he was never molested on his walks alone. Only once, on a sea front, he "felt a man leering" at him; it was a terrible experience, and he moved away very quickly. (Even so, as Mr. Read was over six feet in height, it was possible that he had mistaken detached curiosity for licentious interest.) He rejoiced that "the heart of English manhood" seemed "as sound as ever".

On second thoughts Mr. Read began to doubt whether he had chosen the most discreet path of sociological inquiry. "Forgive me my spasm of folly," he said. "Because of it I shall be a better man, a truer servant of humanity."

All ages have their difficulties for servants of humanity, as others besides Mr. Read found. Captain Harold Vincent's anxiety to persuade his fellows of the benefits of exposing the naked body to the light involved him in a series of disagreements with unsympathetic policemen, magistrates, and district councillors, but the recent persistence of newspaper stories of "secret nudist camps" in

various parts of the English countryside suggests that Captain Vincent's arduous pioneering in Hyde Park and on the banks of the Welsh Harp at Hendon has not been without effect.

The moral battle continues. By 1931 the attacking army had advanced so far that when Mr. Harold Nicolson praised *Ulysses* in a B.B.C. talk nobody protested; and in 1932 the defence was still so strong that a young man was sent to prison for six months, not for publishing obscenity, but for merely seeking to have printed for private circulation verses that an Old Bailey jury considered obscene. But whereas ten years ago the "daring" gestures were conspicuous, now acts of repression have the greater news value.

CHAPTER X

MURDER

*Cruelty has a human heart,
And jealousy a human face.*

—WILLIAM BLAKE.

The Scientific Murder Myth—Mrs. Thompson and Bywaters—Patrick Mahon—"Crumbles Bungalow Rock"—The Case of Elsie Cameron—Expert Evidence—Vaquier's Vanity—Gunmen—The Shooting of P.C. Gutteridge—The Blazing Car Crime—"The Co-Efficient of the Expansion of Brass."

THERE was a time, when wonders were coming rather thick upon us, when an unusually large number of people looked forward to the advent in real life of the Master Criminal, equipped with all the latest scientific discoveries. Fortunately the blacker forms of crime seem to be incompatible either with the industry necessary for accumulating technical knowledge, or with the forethought to employ it. Except where those easy toys the motor-car and the revolver have assisted the motor bandit, even the thievish temperament seems too primitive to avail itself of the facilities of the modern world. The most conspicuous successes in recent burglary have actually followed on something like reversion, when the "cat" (or more properly the "ape") burglar displayed a positively prehuman agility in climbing. The law, on the other hand, meets the felon with the electric alarm and the invisible ray, pursues him by airplane, and cries "stop thief" over the wireless.

In no branch of crime does the conservatism of the

offender and the progressiveness of our guardians appear to a more marked degree than in the blackest of all, murder. Unless there is a section of proficient in homicide so advanced and so skilful that we in every case assign their victims' deaths to natural causes, we may say the murderer still employs means as primitive as his motives, for, though many have escaped detection, we may be sure that it is on the whole the crudest type of all, the madman, who enjoys greatest immunity. The Blackheath murderer made his unspeakable attack in what must have been the most conspicuous fashion quite near a footpath on a much frequented London common. The killer of Vera Page wheeled his victim's body through streets that were by no means empty and put it in a front garden. Such crimes as this, in which the murderer takes short odds against being caught redhanded (though all the same there is no instance of such a crime being detected in the act), generally defeat scientific detection, which rather assembles its minutiae of evidence against an already apprehended suspect.

But though it does not function in such cases as these, science is all on the side of Scotland Yard. The perfect poison has not yet appeared; nor would it often be used if it had. Poisoners cling to the well-established tradition of arsenic and ground glass even in face of what modern improvements there are. No devouring ray destroys either the living or the dead. Disease cultures are inaccessible to the lay murderer. The aeroplane has been used only by a flamboyant suicide: a doctor, who chartered a two-seater to cross the Channel, shot the pilot from behind when they were over the sea and plunged to what was too good a death for such utter vulgarity and utter heartlessness. In fact, it seems that the super mind that can bring all the resources of science to the safe destruction of his fellow men exists among us in one form only, as expert witness for the prosecution. The first conspicuous murder of post-

War days was, however, a matter of such crudity in execution and of such traditional motive that no sort of expertise was needed for its elucidation. Three characters, known in every history and in every school of fiction, appeared in an East London suburb under the names of Percy and Edith Thompson, and Frederick Bywaters. The situation to which the background of Greece, or of mediæval Italy or Elizabethan England has lent a certain magnificence, appeared proportionately sordid in the setting of Ilford. Nevertheless, the figures in this tragedy received, and in part deserved, a greater sympathy than falls to the lot of the average murderer.

On the 4th October, 1922, Percy Thompson and his wife were returning from Ilford Station to their home after a visit to a theatre. Bywaters approached them, stabbed Thompson in the neck and throat, and made off. Mrs. Thompson cried out for help, and people came, but neither then nor afterwards when called on by the police did she make any mention of Bywaters. Thompson and his wife were both employed in the City, and their combined income was between £10 and £12 a week. Bywaters was employed as a steward on the P. & O. Liner *Morea*. He seems to have been a likeable and steady young man: he was very young, only twenty years old at the time of the trial. Mrs. Thompson was eight years older: she was a strongly built, dark and rather handsome woman, and clearly one of those people whose passions are altogether out of proportion to their intelligence. From the sentimental point of view, Thompson was the least attractive of the three. It was settled very quickly in the public mind, that he was something of a bully, though exactly to what extent and on what provocation was less certain. There was at any rate sufficiently strong evidence for it to lend a faint glimmer of chivalry to the motive of what was in every other respect a singularly cowardly attack.

Bywaters had known the Thompsons for some time and he became intimate with them just before June, 1921, when they shared a holiday in Shanklin, Isle of Wight. On their return, Bywaters stayed at their house until August, when there was some sort of quarrel, and Bywaters was asked by Thompson to leave. By this time he was Mrs. Thompson's lover, and the letters she wrote to him while he was away on his next voyage were of such a nature as to provide most important material for the prosecution, though at times they seemed so unbalanced that they might almost have been used to defend the writer on a plea of insanity.

"I am going to try the glass again occasionally . . . I have got an electric light globe this time. . . . I have used a light bulb three times, but the third time he found a piece, so I have given it up. . . . I used a lot—big pieces, too, not powder—and it has no effect."

Besides this sort of thing, she enclosed many cuttings from newspapers referring to poisonings and death pacts, and was constantly recommending him to read novels concerning the eternal triangle, and especially those in which the situation was solved by the death of the third party.

It soon became clear that however elaborately Mrs. Thompson had indulged her morbid fantasies, she was an incredibly futile executant in murder, and a disastrous accomplice. Her attempts at poisoning by ground glass failed only by that ineptitude which results on subconscious ambivalence, and once her fantasy had been realized she broke down altogether. Having made her statement to the police, she was escorted past the room in which Bywaters was detained, and seeing him there, she cried out incontinently, "Oh God! Oh God! What can I do? Why did he do it? I did not want him to do it."

The whole affair at once collapsed about their ears. She immediately admitted that she had recognized Bywaters

in the affray. They were both charged with murder. Bywaters at once made a statement insisting that he had done all the stabbing.

From this moment the question of conviction as far as Bywaters was concerned, was never in doubt. His plea of self-defence was a weak one. He said that he had waited for the Thompsons, rushed up to them in a state of excitement, pushed the woman aside and grabbed the man, asking him why he would not consent to a divorce. Then, thinking that Thompson was feeling for a revolver, he drew his knife and stabbed.

In partial support of this it was urged that the murder, though obviously contemplated, had not been planned for that moment: it was incredible that both parties could have been so stupid as to have made arrangements which offered so little chance of escape. Besides this, their stories on being first examined were so extremely different that pre-arrangement was obviously out of the question. Although the plea of self-defence seemed never to have much chance of success, the youth of Bywaters, and the obviously strong influence of Mrs. Thompson upon him, and his position as protector before the act, and his chivalry in attempting to take the entire blame afterwards, prepossessed the man in the street, or perhaps the woman in the street, so strongly in his favour that it was with something like universal regret that England heard the inevitable verdict. During the trial Mrs. Thompson suffered a proportionate unpopularity. Her letters aroused as much disgust as they merited, though not perhaps on exactly just grounds. Besides this, her position in the triangle was unfavourable, for while all the world loves a lover, it has less affection for the married partner in the amour. In this case, too, the disparity of age decreased Mrs. Thompson's share of the romance as much as (rather more justly) it laid on her the greater burden of responsibility. It was felt that she had been

the ruin of a warm-hearted and romantic young man; though, in fact, it was the brutal stupidity of Bywaters rather than his romanticism that laid him open to her influence.

This unpopularity was to be greatly modified a little later, but at the time it was thought that it played an undue part in proceedings. Mr. Filson Young considered that an artificial, or perhaps a too natural, stigma was laid on Mrs. Thompson by the "guiltiness" of her passion and that too effective use was made of this primitive rhetorical appeal. In her favour also, was the fact that Sir Bernard Spilsbury could find no trace of crushed glass or other poison in his post-mortem, so that it seemed that her letters were the outcome of an unbalanced fancy rather than records of an attempted crime. Because of this and because of the obvious lack of prearrangement on the fatal evening, Lord Birkenhead considered that there was yet some doubt of the woman's complicity in this definite instance. The jury, however, thought otherwise, and their verdict was confirmed by the Court of Appeal.

The position of Mrs. Thompson was now changed. Instead of being the woman who had plotted the murder of her husband, she was now the first woman in fifteen years who was going to be hanged. Pending execution, every day added new numbers to the large body who were dismayed by the sentence. On the actual day, it is not an exaggeration to say that profound uneasiness reigned throughout the country. During the week that followed, this feeling was heightened by persistent rumours of horrifying details related to the actual hanging, and a little later the matter was revived in the public mind by the attempted suicide of Ellis, the executioner.

It was nearly a year and a half later that the next crime of historical importance came to light. Far from having

even the most soiled tatters of romance to cloak its hatefulness, this murder was perhaps the most disgusting of any that have been laid to the account of a sane man in this century. Patrick Mahon was one of those men in whom good looks lend an additional intensity to dislike. He was a nasty-handsome man of that type which possesses a concentrated attractiveness for a certain weak-minded sort of woman. His record was a bad one. At the age of twenty-one, when he had been married under a year, he forged a cheque for £123, and spent the money on taking a girl to the Isle of Man. For this, he was only bound over, and later obtained a new position with a dairy firm in Wiltshire. Here, too, he embezzled money, and was this time sentenced to two years' imprisonment. On his release, he lived for a time in Wiltshire and afterwards at Sunningdale. It was at Sunningdale, in 1916, that he entered a branch of the National Provincial Bank and beat a servant girl unconscious with a hammer. It was said that when this girl regained consciousness, she found herself in the arms of Mahon, who was kissing her. For this crime, Mahon received five years' penal servitude.

His wife, who had a little daughter to support, found work at a firm which had a factory at Sunbury, where she eventually was promoted to a position of some responsibility. When her husband reappeared, she again manifested that extraordinary capacity for forgiveness which marks the women who fall in love with this particular type, and took him back and got him employment with her firm, as a commercial traveller. Such men make good commercial travellers, and Mahon was very shortly appointed Sales Manager. By this time, the company was in the hands of the Receiver.

In 1923, the Receiver engaged a new typist, Miss Emily Kaye, who was described as a competent and experienced woman of thirty-seven, who lived at a women's

hostel in Guildford Street, and who had put by quite a comfortable amount of savings. Mahon was not long in inspiring a violent passion in this woman and in possessing himself of a substantial part of her nest-egg. Three hundred-pound notes passed between them and these were cashed at the Bank of England and signed with a false name and address. Miss Kaye's emotion now developed into that stage which is the plague of the mercenary Don Juan. She constantly pressed Mahon to go away with her, and refused to be cast aside. By the beginning of 1924, she found that she was pregnant, and, according to Mahon, she pressed him to take a place in which they might at least share holidays and week-ends. It can be understood that Mahon found his position embarrassing. His home life was developing in security and comfort, and it was now menaced by the obstinacy of a middle-aged woman whose attraction was spent. He had to choose between great embarrassment and discomfort—and murder. This type of weakling always chooses murder.

Mr. Edgar Wallace, in analysing the crime, considered that in Mahon's case the prospective discomfort of a *dénouement* was probably heightened by a factor that was not referred to at the trial. This was, that Miss Kaye had found the newspaper account of Mahon's trial for assault and robbery, and that she may have used her knowledge of this secret as a threat.

At the beginning of April, 1924, Mahon took a bungalow at the Crumbles, between Eastbourne and Pevensey Bay. He took it under an assumed name. On Saturday, April 12, he purchased a saw and a knife in London and then travelled to Eastbourne, where he met Miss Kaye. They went together to the bungalow to start what was described as “the love experiment”. Two days before this, he had met a Miss Duncan in Richmond. She was a stranger to him, but he invited her to dinner on the fol-

lowing Wednesday, but before that appointment, on the intervening Saturday, he had taken Miss Kaye to the bungalow. They stayed there over the week-end, and on the Tuesday, they went up to London for the day. In his account at the trial, he stated that Miss Kaye had been pestering him to apply for a passport so that they could go abroad together, but on their way back to the bungalow on Tuesday evening, he admitted to her that he had not applied, and there was a quarrel.

He stated that later they were sitting in the room and that Miss Kaye became very hysterical. He got up to go to bed, and she flung an axe at him, which had been used for cracking coal, and which was lying on the table. She then leapt across the room, clutching his face. The struggle became more violent, they seized each other by the throat, and fell. In the fall, he said, Miss Kaye's head struck the coal-scuttle, and she died. When he realized that she was dead, he dragged her into a bedroom and covered her with a coat. Then he went out of the house, wandered about during the night, and in the morning he went to Eastbourne. This was Wednesday morning, and he had an appointment with Miss Duncan for the evening. He kept this appointment and persuaded Miss Duncan to spend Easter with him at the bungalow. She was to come down on the following Friday, which was Good Friday. At the trial, he said that he asked her because he was afraid to go back there alone. Nevertheless, he spent the day intervening at the bungalow, beginning his detestable task of cutting up the body. Miss Duncan arrived next day, noticed nothing wrong and departed on Monday. Thereupon Mahon continued his work on the corpse. He cut the body to pieces and boiled the flesh. Much of this he packed into a gladstone bag. He burnt the head, and smashed up the bones and threw them outside the bungalow. He took the bag to London

by train, and on the journey, he threw pieces of the flesh out of the window. The empty bag, empty except for some bloodstained rags, he deposited in the cloakroom at Waterloo Station on the last Monday in April. This was the immediate cause of his undoing, and by a stroke of irony, the final exposure was unconsciously engineered by his wife. She had for some time had fears that Mahon was mixed up with book-making, and when she found the cloakroom ticket, she thought she might settle her suspicions by getting the bag examined, through the agency of a friend, who had some connexion with the railway police. As soon as the bag had been looked into, Mrs. Mahon was informed that it contained nothing to suggest that her husband had been book-making. On the evening of Friday, May 2, Mahon was arrested, on calling for the bag.

There is perhaps nothing more macabre in the history of the Old Bailey than those parts of Mahon's cross-examination that deal with his disposal of the corpse.

PATRICK MAHON

Cross-examination by SIR H. CURTIS-BENNETT *on the 18th*
July, 1924.

Sir H. Curtis-Bennett. Do I understand your story to be that what you took up in that [the Gladstone Bag] was only boiled flesh?

Mahon. Yes, it was boiled flesh. Some was boiled more than others.

Sir H. C.-B. There was a great deal of blood upon the rags, was there not?

Mahon. Yes, on the rags.

Sir H. C.-B. Do you still say you burned the head?

Mahon. I not only say I burned the head, but I did burn the head.

Sir H. C.-B. In which room did you burn the head?

Mahon. In the sitting-room.

Sir H. C.-B. The front sitting-room?

Mahon. This sitting-room here.

Sir H. C.-B. How long do you say it took?

Mahon. I cannot say; six hours, probably.

Sir H. C.-B. Are you not clear upon the matter at all?

Mahon. I am clear that I burned the head.

Sir H. C.-B. Are not you clear about the time? This was a terrible thing you were doing. Did you not realize how long it took?

Mahon. If you knew the circumstances in which the head was burned—I can only say burned—I could not even stay in the room while it was burning.

Sir H. C.-B. I want to test this story of yours a little. You say it took six hours?

Mahon. I think about six hours.

Sir H. C.-B. Did you say to Sergeant Frew: "I burned the head in an ordinary fire. It was finished in three hours. The poker went through the head when I poked it." Do you remember saying that?

Mahon. No, I do not remember saying that.

The object of the prosecution was to establish the fact that Mahon had taken particular care to dispose of the head and the uterus more completely than he troubled to do with the rest of the corpse, for the one provided evidence that Miss Kaye's death was not caused by her fall against the coal-scuttle, and the other contained a hint of the motive of the crime. At this juncture, however, science, in the familiar personification of Sir Bernard Spilsbury, stepped in to defeat the murderer's ends. Sir Bernard declared that death could not have resulted from the alleged fall, and that his examination of those other parts of the body, which Mahon's ignorance of medical matters caused

him to leave intact, revealed that they were parts of a pregnant woman.

Patrick Mahon was vain. He disliked the pallor which resulted upon his detention in prison. On the days when his own account of his actions was being read in court, he used, for the improvement of his appearance, a preparation of sunburn cream, which gave him something of the bronzed and seaside air which suited him best. There was no widespread regret when the executioner accorded him the infinite favour of rendering him no longer Mr. Patrick Mahon.

There was, however, an extraordinary display of morbid interest at the scene of the crime. Between 500 and 1,000 people visited the bungalow every day, and the owner threw it open to the public, at a charge of 1s. per head. 2d. out of each shilling was deducted for entertainment tax, and a part of the proceeds were given to charity. Charabancs ran regularly to the spot, and a refreshment stall was erected at the gate of the bungalow, at which bars of rock, bearing the words “Crumbles Bungalow Rock”, were on sale.

It was not until a year later that any serious controversy arose over the infallibility of expert Crown witnesses for the prosecution. This was in the case of John Thorne, who was tried before Mr. Justice Finlay at Lewes on the 11th March, 1925, for the murder of his fiancée, Elsie Cameron. Thorne was then twenty-four. He had served a short time in the R.A.F. at the end of the War, and on being demobilized he had had difficulty in finding regular work. In August, 1922, he began a small poultry farm at Crowborough in Sussex. This farm was apparently never very successful, and Thorne was always dependent upon his father for subsidies.

He had known Elsie Cameron since the end of 1920 and

they became engaged two years later. The unhappy girl appears to have been one of those who lend colour to the theory that there exists a type of murderess. She seems to have been extremely neurotic, hysterical, weak-minded; to such a degree in fact that she was unable to hold any sort of employment. How far this lack of balance was due to her violent emotion concerning Thorne is not clear, but it may safely be assumed that the weakness was natural to her, though probably latent until this affair. In her attachment to Thorne, she concentrated every vestige of her strength and tenacity. There is no more certain stimulus to murderous inclinations than the unreasoning, undivertable clinging of a creature who is in all other respects as weak as water. The situation was further complicated by a persistent illusion which possessed the girl, that she was pregnant by Thorne, and she gave him no rest on the question of marriage.

At about Whitsun, 1924, Thorne became attached to another girl, one who lived in the locality. She, too, spent a considerable amount of time in the hut that was Thorne's dwelling-place on his poultry farm, and it appears that she met Elsie Cameron there. It appears that in both cases there was some rather wretched and abortive love-making, and that in the case of Elsie Cameron at least, it had gone far enough to make possible her illusion of pregnancy. Both these girls bothered Thorne to marry them, and Thorne was most unwilling to marry either, though it appears that he preferred the second girl. In his letters to Miss Cameron, he made confessions, which he afterwards denied, of intimacy with the other, apparently in the hope that infidelity might induce Miss Cameron to give him up. Her letters in reply, reproaching him, he showed to the other girl, probably with the same purpose. Elsie Cameron allowed nothing to swerve her from her determination to be married by Christmas, for, as she said, though he had

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POST-WAR MURDERERS

(1) Mrs Thompson, (2) Bywaters, (3) Thorne, (4) Mahon,
(5) Vacquier, (6) Brown, (7) Rouse.

broken her heart, she still had first claim on him, and her baby must have a name. She wrote also to say that her condition would soon become noticeable and that she insisted on being married by Christmas. Thorne excused himself, and not untruly, on account of his great poverty; the farm was still running at a loss and all they would have to live in would be the hut. Matters were still undecided between them on December 5, when Elsie Cameron, carrying an attaché-case, was seen in the semi-darkness approaching Thorne's plot of land. She was never seen again.

During the next fortnight, Thorne gave various indications of his ignorance of the girl's whereabouts, and his anxiety concerning her. He wrote to her parents inquiring after her, and saying how alarmed he was. He discussed the disappearance with neighbours, and had various voluntary contacts with the local police, to whom, on one occasion, he gave a photograph of the missing girl. He even began by writing letters to her, asking why she had not appeared. During this time, her dismembered body, wrapped in sacking, was buried in one of his chicken runs, and by it was her head, which he had placed in a tin box. Her attaché-case, which contained the last pathetic evidence of her delusion of pregnancy—a child's frock, he buried in a potato patch just inside the gate of his field. On the 18th December the Police Superintendent began to act upon an important piece of information which he had received. Certain people in the locality had seen Elsie Cameron approaching the hut. A search was made in the poultry farm, but nothing came to light. Nearly a month later, the police arrived for a second investigation, and this time they found the attaché-case.

Thorne now abandoned his pretence of ignorance. He made a statement on which he later founded his defence at the trial. He said that Elsie Cameron had arrived at the bungalow on the 5th December, and they had sat discussing

the situation, and especially the question of marriage until a quarter to ten that night. He then had to go out to meet her rival, in order to help to carry her shopping bags from the station. He returned at eleven-thirty and was horrified to find Miss Cameron had hanged herself. He suddenly became afraid that his conduct towards her might bring upon him the suspicion of murder, and determined to conceal her body. He removed the head and legs and buried the dismembered corpse and the attaché-case as has been described.

This was an improbable story. There was no doubt that Elsie Cameron was in a state that made suicide not unlikely in her case, but Thorne's description of his subsequent behaviour convinced nobody. It is not, however, the British legal principle that the suspect must prove his innocence, but that the prosecution must establish his guilt beyond all reasonable doubt. In Thorne's case, although it is almost certain that justice was done, it was felt by many that certain methods of the prosecution were open to criticism. The first criticism which may be levelled against the Crown case is not peculiar to post-War days, but in so far as these days boast a greater degree of enlightenment, it is more regrettable now. It is not unusual for Counsel for the prosecution to adopt a moral tone which seems either extremely foolish or extremely hypocritical. As in the Bywaters case, so in this trial of Thorne, there was a great deal of discussion of points of conduct, which much as they may have reflected on Thorne's good taste, or his sexual efficiency, or his fitness for ordination into the church, had no real relation to the likelihood of his having committed murder. Inquiries conducted inch by inch into the precise extent of his hobbledehoyish fondlings proved him to be a naughty young man, but not more so than a very large percentage of other young men. Just as adultery in Mrs. Thompson's case was made use of to

make it seem the more likely that she was capable of murder, so in Thorne's case, dialogues like the following were used for the creation of an atmosphere.

Sir H. Curtis-Bennett. You were a member, were you, of something which calls itself the Alliance of Honour?

Thorne. I had been.

Sir H. C.-B. How long had you been a member of that?

Thorne. I had been a member of that probably over ten years, but I had not renewed my membership for 1924 through being at Crowborough.

Sir H. C.-B. You had not renewed it. Had you renewed it in 1922 and 1923?

Thorne. Yes, as far as I know, I had.

Sir H. C.-B. When you joined that Alliance of Honour, do you make some sort of written or verbal promise not to have indecent relations with girls?

Thorne. Yes. That is what it amounts to.

Sir H. C.-B. And being a member of that in 1922, and 1923, when was it that you first did start to have indecent connexions with your fiancée?

Thorne. I first became intimate with Miss Cameron in 1923.

Sir H. C.-B. Early in 1923—before August, anyway?

Thorne. Yes, probably before August.

Sir H. C.-B. Do you really tell the jury the reason you got Miss Cameron to become a member of that Alliance of Honour was because she was growing very passionate?

Thorne. Yes.

Sir H. C.-B. Were you growing less passionate?

Thorne. As a matter of fact, I was becoming rather

alarmed by her conduct, especially when she was in a state of nervous collapse.

Sir H. C.-B. Passion which had been aroused by you, Thorne?

Thorne. Oh no, sir.

Sir H. C.-B. When you say passion are you talking of sexual passion?

Thorne. Sexual passion.

Sir H. C.-B. You had been arousing her sexual passion during 1923 and 1924?

Thorne. Oh, no. I had not been arousing her sexual passion any more than she had been arousing mine.

Sir H. C.-B. You do not put that upon the girl, do you? You do not put it upon this girl, that it was her fault there was intimate connexion between you, do you?

Thorne. Not necessarily, sir. I suppose it was mutual.

This seems to indicate that Thorne was an unpleasant young man, but that he is, saving your reverence, a whore master, that, I utterly deny. If sack and sugar be a fault, God help the wicked. There is an inexactitude in the use of the term "indecent" in the above, a psychological blindness in the cross-examiner's horrified amazement at the possibility of Thorne's suggesting that it was the girl's "fault" that there was intimate relation, and there is a savage illogic that implies that the breaking of one tabu has any connexion with the breaking of another, that ill sorts with the dignity of the law.

In the case of Thorne the prosecution was criticized pretty widely on a ground more definite and even more serious than such matters as taste, good manners, strict relevance and common sense. The second criticism was, like the first, a theoretical one. There is little doubt that

Thorne was guilty, and the methods of the prosecution were commendable for their efficiency, though they do not appeal to the stylist. There is little doubt also that Sir Bernard Spilsbury was right in declaring certain marks on the dead girl's neck to have been attributable to natural causes. Nevertheless, three other doctors, who examined the head later, declared that these marks were consistent with pressure by cord, and therefore lent colour to Thorne's statement that the girl had hanged herself. Many people, who held the abstract values of justice higher than efficiency in any particular instance, felt that as far as this section of the evidence was concerned, there was too implicit faith in the expert for the Crown on the part of laymen whose knowledge of his methods and qualification was based only on his high official position. The question that then arose, and that was to be repeated still more strongly in a later case, had less to do with the guilt or otherwise of the prisoner, than as to whether any man should be condemned on conclusions arrived at by so highly technical a process that the jury could not follow every step of it. And even if this was justifiable, it was argued, surely it could only be so when there was complete unanimity among the experts. Who might not be hanged on a pronouncement of Newton, while Einstein (for the defence) was tardy upon the road?

However that may be, the judgment at Lewes was against Thorne, and it was supported by the Court of Appeal. He himself was confident all the way through, and asked whether he should leave the Law Courts by a side door, or go out in front to receive an ovation. He was removed forcibly, protesting his innocence at the top of his voice.

The next considerable trial was that of Vaquier, which perhaps created the wide sensation that it did rather on the strength of the prisoner's beard and nationality than on

any particular complexity or horror. It was another example of murder resulting on the eternal triangle, though in this case the homicidal lover had not the wife as his accomplice.

Alfred Jones was the proprietor of the Blue Anchor Hotel at Byfleet, Surrey. He was an unprepossessing type of publican; he was a heavy drinker, and he was in the habit of taking bromo salts as a restorative in the morning.

Mrs. Mabel Jones had a great deal of worry over money matters, and in January, 1924, she went to France to recuperate. She stayed at Biarritz.

Jean Pierre Vaquier, handsome, well-bearded and impecunious, was then giving wireless concerts at the hotel, using a wireless set of his own.

There were wide differences in appearance, as in name between Mr. Jones and Monsieur Vaquier, and it was not long before he and the lady became acquainted. Neither could speak the other's language, but they managed to express themselves to one another first by using a dictionary, and, when the limits of that volume proved too narrow, by taking a room at another hotel and living there as man and wife. This entente was interrupted by a telegram from Mr. Jones, recalling his wife, and thus strengthening an idea that Vaquier had of visiting England in order to sell the patent rights of a sausage machine. The double urge resulted in his following Mrs. Jones only a day later, and taking a room in London at the Hotel Russell. His business concerning the invention apparently hung fire, but for this he was compensated by a visit from Mrs. Jones, who first stayed with him and then paid the bill. During his stay at the Russell, i.e. from the 8th to the 14th February, Vaquier paid several visits to a chemist's shop in Southampton Row where he became acquainted with one of the partners, and purchased various chemicals for experiments. He then repaired to the Blue Anchor Hotel,

arriving unexpectedly, and finding the husband ill in bed. He was now without money, but proposed to pay for his board and lodging by receiving a sum from the American purchasers of his patent.

Mr. Jones got up to attend on his uninvited and unpaying guest at the end of February, and very shortly afterwards Vaquier went to London and bought a further supply of chemicals, among which there was this time a quantity of strychnine. The chemist was unwilling at first to sell the poison, but Vaquier told him that he was well known as an experimenter on wireless, and that he needed the strychnine in connexion with this work. On this assurance the chemist handed over the poison, for which Vaquier signed a false name.

He returned to Byfleet, where his position was not altogether an easy one. According to Mrs. Jones, their intimacy was confined to London, and it appears that the shortage of money forbade any expeditions there. Their last visit was early in March, and even on that occasion they were compelled to leave without paying the hotel bill. Vaquier suggested a loan, which was refused. His infatuation for Mrs. Jones increased and he frequently begged her to leave her husband, but she would not consent. On the 28th March, there was a party at the hotel, and the proprietor and his wife were late in rising the next morning. Vaquier was downstairs early, but instead of sitting in the coffee room, as was his wont, he insisted on staying in the bar parlour, which he would not leave for a moment, not even when it was being cleaned. Mr. Jones' bottle of bromo salts was kept in the bar parlour.

When eventually he came down that morning, he was in need of a dose, and as he took it he exclaimed to his wife, "Oh, God! they're bitter." Vaquier sat in the arm-chair, watching, with the dispassionate curiosity of the scientist, for the result. Mrs. Jones became alarmed.

She tasted the salts, mixed an emetic for her husband, made him some tea and sent for the doctor. The doctor, when he arrived, said that the man was dying, and noticed symptoms of strychnine poisoning. Mrs. Jones put the bottle containing the small remainder of the salts into a drawer. Vaquier asked for the bottle and it was given him. When next it was inquired for, it was found in the drawer, and had been washed out, but not so well washed as to prevent some traces of strychnine being found on examination. A week later Vaquier left the hotel, which a certain atmosphere of suspicion now rendered intolerable to him.

He went to Woking, where he attracted some attention. It was suggested that he should be photographed for the Press, an appeal which his murderer's vanity did not permit him to refuse. One of the photographs taken appeared on the 16th April, and was seen by the chemist who had sold him the strychnine. Three days later he was, of course, arrested.

The defence was a hopeless business. Two things had delivered Vaquier helpless into the hands of the prosecution. One of these was his vanity, whose operation we have seen. During the trial, his greatest preoccupation was his personal appearance, and particularly as to the hair and beard, which he kept well brushed and sweetly perfumed. His vanity betrayed him: his ignorance condemned him to death. Strychnine has no conceivable use in wireless experiments, and the last traces of it were not to be removed in the hasty rinsing of the bottle. Vaquier did not know these things, and his poor pose as the scientific murderer collapsed under his feet.

A superficial up-to-dateness of equipment, and a very real, almost atavistic, crudity of motive characterized the murder of P.C. Gutteridge by Fred Browne of Clapham Junction. Browne and his weaker accomplice, Kennedy,

were perhaps the nearest approach to the Chicago gangster that we have yet been plagued with. Both were toughs, and Browne, garage proprietor and car thief, proved himself to be the sort of man who would kill rather than risk arrest for a comparatively small felony.

A doctor's car was stolen and driven to London by a roundabout route. The next morning P.C. Gutteridge was found shot dead at Stapleford Abbots in Essex. Later in the morning the stolen car was found at Brixton. Its owner had noticed his speedometer when he last left his car, and the record was increased by forty-three miles when it was found at Brixton. The direct route to London was considerably less than forty-three miles, which was however approximately the distance of a roundabout route which included Stapleford Abbots. There were bloodstains on the footboard of the car. P.C. Gutteridge had been shot by an old-fashioned type of ammunition known as mark IV, which had been a service issue very early in the war. In the abandoned car was the case of a spent cartridge—mark IV. The obvious task for the police was to discover who had stolen and abandoned the car. In the absence of other clues, they resorted to a process of elimination of possible criminals, and this took a long time. Over three hundred men were asked to account for their movements on that night and over a thousand revolvers were examined. Between the date of the murder, September 27, 1927, and January, 1928, they had reduced the list to a few suspects of whom Browne was one. He was the only one, said the police, whose movements could not be traced. Although Browne was running his fairly public trade as garage proprietor all this time, it was not until he was involved in a car collision at Sheffield that the police discovered that their suspect was living at Clapham Junction. There were not wanting malicious tongues to suggest that our police force had known Browne's whereabouts all the time, and some

went so far as to say that they had deferred his arrest until an opportunity had arisen of planting certain sorts of evidence against him. The authors of such rumours as these failed to reflect that no man and no public body is guilty until proved so, and that an appearance of extreme likelihood is not proof.

On January 20, a party of detectives went to Clapham Junction and arrested Browne. They discovered some of the ammunition they were looking for, several loaded revolvers, and a quantity of doctors' apparatus, which last was identified by the doctor whose car had been stolen. Shortly after this, they traced William Kennedy, whom they had discovered to have been Browne's companion on the night of the murder. A large party waited outside his house in Liverpool until he appeared, whereon Detective-Sergeant Matherson made to arrest him and Kennedy put up a revolver, saying, "Stand back, or I'll shoot." Matherson wrestled with him. Apparently Kennedy pulled the trigger so that the hammer rose and clicked, but the safety catch was on. Most probably Kennedy had no real intention of shooting, but Matherson found the situation quite sufficiently exciting. When Kennedy was at last firmly held, the detective fainted.

When Kennedy found that the game was up he made a statement in the hope of being accepted as King's evidence. He admitted the stealing of the car, and admitted his presence at the murder, but he denied all complicity and insisted that he did not know that Browne was carrying a revolver.

"Browne was driving and I was sitting on his left in front. The policeman came up and asked Browne where he was going, and where he had come from. Browne told him that we were from Lea Bridge Road Garage, and had been out to do some repairs. The policeman then asked if he had a card. Browne said, 'No.'

'Have you a driver's licence?'

Browne again said, 'No.'

The policeman then asked him again where he came from, and Browne stammered in his answer.

The policeman then said, 'Is the car yours?'

I said, 'No: the car is mine.'

The policeman then flashed his lamp in both our faces, and was at this time standing close to the running-board on the off side. He asked me if I knew the number of the car, and Browne said, 'You can see it in front of the car.'

The policeman then said, 'Yes, I know the number of the car and I want to see if you do.'

I said, 'I can give you the number. It's TW 6120.'

He said, 'Very well, I'll take particulars.'

He put the torch in his pocket and pulled out his notebook, and was in the act of writing, when I heard a report, quickly followed by another. I saw the policeman stagger back and fall over by the hedge. I said to Browne, 'What have you done?' and then saw that he had a large Webley revolver in his hand.

He said, 'Get out quick!' I immediately got out, and went round to the policeman, who was lying on his back. Browne came over and said, 'I'll finish the——'

Browne said, 'What are you looking at me like that for?' and then stooping down shot him at close range through both eyes."

Behind this peculiarly shocking act, there lies a piece of superstition which is as interesting as it is barbarous. Browne's last remark was addressed to the dying constable. He believed that his victim was trying to fix his image upon the fading retinæ of his eyes. One of Rudyard Kipling's short stories is founded upon this notion of a dead man's eye retaining the imprint of the last scene it has witnessed, but it was none the less a surprise to most people to learn that the belief was held, and thus horridly acted upon, in

real life. It even seemed possible that the policeman himself subscribed to the same primitive notion. This crime was so repulsive that it did not need the last niceties of proof to make Browne at least an object of abhorrence, and his execution a matter of general satisfaction. Nevertheless, in the opinion of the purist, these last niceties were lacking, and a number of people, including Mr. Bernard Shaw, wrote to protest as to the nature and the quantity of the evidence upon which they were sentenced.

The last sensational murder of the decade was also connected with a motor-car, and the murderer's conviction was also carried through largely on the evidence of the official expert.

A. A. Rouse, commercial traveller, of Friern Barnet, had been for some time in difficulties. Prominent among his embarrassments was a wife to whom he was bigamously married, three illegitimate children by two other women, and the cost of keeping up his own home in spite of these drains upon his limited resources.

On the night of November 5, 1930, his car, a Morris Minor, was found in flames near Hardingstone, a village on a by-road off the route from London to Leicester. In the car was the body of an unknown man.

Two young men, returning from a Guy Fawkes dance, saw the blaze of the fire and saw Rouse coming out of a ditch about two hundred yards from the scene of the conflagration. He shouted to them, "It looks as if somebody had got a bonfire up there." They noticed his confusion and his smart clothing.

After his unlooked-for encounter with these two young men, Rouse made for the main road, where he stopped a lorry and got a lift to London. From there he immediately took a motor-coach to Wales, where he stayed the next night with the family of the woman to whom he was bigamously

married. The next morning he was put to further confusion by the arrival in the house of that day's *Daily Sketch*, on the front page of which was a photograph of the ruins of the car. The ownership had been traced from the number plate, and in the paper was a reference to the other, and legal, Mrs. Rouse. Before anyone else could notice this reference, Rouse pocketed the paper and left the house, saying he must go to London to communicate with the police. A neighbour gave him a lift to Cardiff. To this man Rouse said he had reported the matter to the police and to the insurance company, but he showed such a nervous disinclination to talk about it as to awaken suspicion. The man felt impelled to telephone to the police to inform them that the owner of the burned car was on his way to London by motor-coach. At Hammersmith, the coach was stopped, and Rouse was arrested.

If, as seems certain, Rouse was guilty of the murder, his motive was to have the corpse of the wayfarer he had picked up, mistaken for his own, and to disappear from the increasingly tightening net of his embarrassments. This motive had been frustrated by the appearance of the two young men, and Rouse had to fall back upon a plausible account of an accident.

He said in his statement to the police, that shortly after leaving London, he had been asked for a lift to the Midlands, by a man upon the road. Near Northampton he had taken the wrong turning, and as he was tired, his companion proposed they might pull up and go to sleep. Before settling down, Rouse got out a can of petrol, and asked the man to pour it into the car, while he went to relieve himself. As he went off, the stranger asked for a smoke, and Rouse gave him a cigar, and made sure that he had a match.

Rouse retired to a distance of two or two hundred and fifty yards. From this point he shortly afterwards saw a

light, and soon realized that his car was in flames. He ran back and could not get near it, because of the heat.

This story, which at first appeared quite a possible one, collapsed under a weight of technical evidence for the prosecution. The first doctor who examined the corpse, found pieces of damp cloth smelling strongly of petrol, between the legs of the dead man. He came to the conclusion that the clothes had been soaked in petrol and that the clenching of a leg against the abdomen, had excluded air and fire, and prevented burning. Still more deadly was Dr. Spilsbury's opinion, that the position of the body was "consistent with a man either pitching or being thrown down, face downwards, on the seat of the car from the near-side door". He deduced, from the position of the body also, that the door must have been open, and if so, the man must have been unconscious or he would have escaped. There was a further point, however, on which expert opinion disagreed. The prosecution held that a certain nut in the engine of the car, the petrol union, must have been loosened before the fire, presumably to add to its intensity. But two witnesses came forward voluntarily, to give evidence to the contrary. These were dealt with briskly.

Mr. Arthur Isaacs was one of them. He was an engineer, and fire assessor, and claimed a very vast experience as regards fires in motor-cars. He said that he had invariably found that where the fires had been very intense, the nut in question was left loose, in consequence of the heat. This being so, it might have been tight when the fire started.

"What", said Mr. Norman Birkett, "is the co-efficient of the expansion of brass?"

Isaacs. I beg your pardon.

Birkett. Did you catch the question?

Isaacs. I did not quite hear you.

Birkett. What is the co-efficient of the expansion of brass?

Isaacs. I am afraid I cannot answer that question out of hand.

Birkett. What is it? If you do not know, say so. What is the co-efficient of the expansion of brass? What do I mean by the term?

Isaacs. You want to know what is the expansion of the metal under heat?

Birkett. I asked you: what is the co-efficient of the expansion of brass; do you know what it means?

Isaacs. Put that way, probably I do not.

Birkett. You are an engineer?

Isaacs. I daresay I am.

Birkett. Let me understand what you are. You are not a doctor?

Isaacs. No.

Birkett. Nor a crime investigator?

Isaacs. No.

Birkett. Nor an amateur detective?

Isaacs. No.

Birkett. But an engineer?

Isaacs. Yes.

Birkett. What is the co-efficient of the expansion of brass?

It is to be hoped that the jury themselves were thoroughly cognizant of the significance of the co-efficient in question, and were satisfied that it was a formula impregnable to modification by observed experiment. Otherwise it must have seemed to them that these questions were not as helpful in clearing the issue as Counsel, no doubt, intended them to be.

Thus murder in the twenties ran its conservative course.

M U R D E R

The record is sufficiently sordid, and yet offers a gleam of compensation. Post-War Britain may congratulate itself that its murder chronicle contains nothing as monstrous as the contemporary chronicles of America, France or Germany. We have had our Mahons and our Brownes; but we have been spared a Leopold or a Loeb, a Landru or a Düsseldorf mass-murderer.

CHAPTER XI

THE STUDY AND THE STUDIO

Of all the cants which are canted in this canting world, the cant of criticism is the most tormenting.

—LAURENCE STERNE.

War Poets—The Sitwells—New Voices—T. S. Eliot—D. H. Lawrence and James Joyce—From Chelsea to Bloomsbury—"Debunking"—Looking Back at the War—Stein and Einstein—To-Day and To-Morrow—Hamlet in Modern Dress—Rimaphobia—Modern Painters.

THE progress of thought has definitely accelerated since the War, with effects neither entirely good nor entirely bad. Major scientific theories have succeeded one another at a rate never approached before. Art crazes, and even important art movements have been hinted at in one year, become fully fledged in the next, and five years later have been jettisoned as *vieux jeu*. Pre-Raphaelitism ended its slow cycle only just before the War; Impressionism took half a century to work itself out; Futurism on the other hand arrived and was dead all in a couple of years; and Cubism and experimental prose have already ceased to dominate us, though their important legacies still remain.

The wartime stimulus to science, and the War's effect of breaking down so many barriers of insularity, and thus throwing an accumulated half-century of continental artistic development into our consciousness *en bloc*, was the substantial cause of this. The post-War psychology, with its eagerness for change, and its contempt for all formal barriers

between vision and raw reality, developed it. Study and studio were pervaded with the exhilarating air of destruction and construction, the fury of the iconoclast and the fervour of the pioneer.

Poets had been heralding rebellion since before the War. The Laureate himself was known as much for his experimental vein as for his serenity in face of the urgent demands from Mr. Bottomley that he should earn his keep. And there were signs, even in those days, of a revolt more violent than the scholarly innovations of Dr. Bridges. *Blast* and vorticism were electric in the air of 1914. The "Imagists", Richard Aldington, "H. D.", Ezra Pound and their disciples, had already sprung into the arena as the gladiators of the utterly new, and were received with so brisk a volley of abuse as to puzzle the retrospective modern, who can see little difference between their early work and that of the well established models of previous centuries. The fact that they were considered bizarre is the measure of the peacefulness of the pre-War poetical background, a background in which Masfield was considered a moderately acceptable "left", a background of broad-sheets in the Poetry Bookshop, a background in which the contributors to *Georgian Poetry* were popularly accepted as progressive youth. By 1919 this peaceful landscape was in the first throes of an earthquake. The returned warriors, and to some extent those who unhappily did not return, had been living a sort of poetry that was very different from the official type, and they found the pre-War official medium quite inadequate to its expression, and, some at once and some more gradually, they began to take up the more *outré* vehicle of the highbrow minority, and to develop it to fit their needs.

These recruits were to turn the normally slow and slight effect of the pre-War experimenters into a veritable avalanche, but before the mass of their work had detached

itself from the highbrow peak, there was a brief space in which most lovers of poetry were engrossed by a figure that moved already in the calm air of legend, the dead Rupert Brooke. He had died young, in 1915. War had moved him deeply, but he had been spared those peculiarly nerve-shattering, even soul-shattering, horrors that forced the survivors of the trenches to seek new expressions for experiences that seemed absolutely new to mankind. On his battleship steaming through the Ægean Sea, in company with young friends of his who were also poets, and who were also to die, Brooke saw the War in terms of heroism and of pity, and was racked for no new form. What he wrote was endowed with qualities which all were loth to relinquish, and during the succeeding years his work, and still more his personality, irradiated the imaginations of almost everyone who read. His corner in a foreign field was for ever England, but it was an England that was not to reappear from out the smoke of conflict. Fear, pain, scorn, disgust, weariness, and disillusion were absent from his work, and they were dominant in the minds of those who returned. There was a desire for beauty in our minds then, but it had suffered a war change, and the beauty of Grantchester could not satisfy it. The vicar of Brooke's favourite village stopped the church clock at ten to three; could he have put it back four years, his action might have had more than sentimental effect. As it was, 1919 succeeded upon 1918.

Wilfred Owen had fallen in 1918. Though he never achieved a twentieth part of the popularity of Brooke, his sombre verses offered the returning writers a valid expression of indignations that had become, not memories only, but obsessions. The passion of this second cry from the dead seemed deeper, its form closer to the bitterness of disenchantment. Owen had seen four years of war. He had written: "Above all I am not concerned with poetry.

My subject is war and the pity of war. The poetry is in the pity." Such verse was the first fountain of the flood of anti-militarist anger which burst later in poems, autobiographies, and novels in all the formerly belligerent countries.

To the voices of the dead succeeded those of the living. Siegfried Sassoon, M.C., after years of combatant service, had protested by word and deed against war and was later to recount his own story in two successful volumes of memoirs. The vigorous scorn of his verse, rapid and unconventional, yet clearly the work of a cultured man of letters, was a valuable battalion in the army of revolt. Beside him stood Robert Graves, then the most advanced of the Georgians, Aldington, the Imagist leader, and Osbert Sitwell, the post-Georgian. The three schools had at least a common subject, and a common attitude towards it. Whatever would have been the reaction three or four years earlier, it was not easy for the most bellicose to attack the authors on the score of unmanliness, their distinguished war records precluded this and lent the seriousness of authentic experience to what they had to say.

Besides these, there was one ex-service poet whom even the conservatives were able to enjoy wholeheartedly. Edmund Blunden's essentially rural and pacific melody became more and more concerned with war as time went on. Yet he always lacked the ferocity of the Extreme Left. He was one of the very few poets of the decade who was equally respected by both sides. His verse was generally traditional in form. Yet its very real passion could scarcely be called romantic in the pre-War sense. His career was steadily progressive. In 1930, as in 1920, he represented an intelligence and a sentiment that could not be denied. For some reason Blunden's popularity, however, never quite equalled either that of the older right wing, such poets as A. E. Housman, Kipling, Hardy,

Bridges, Yeats, or that of their younger more or less faithful adherents such as Davies, de la Mare, Monro and Masfield.

These last were little affected by the War: they were that section of the young Georgians of the pre-War era who had sought to preserve poetical values from the enormities of war. They were now balanced by the post-Georgians, modernists who, though associated with the later War poets, were themselves less interested in wartime emotion than in using the new technique in the exploration of new avenues of beauty. These had raised their heads in 1916, their leaders were the Sitwells, and their organ was the annual anthology *Wheels*. In this volume there were two elements that had long been unknown in the very level fields of English verse. These were, first, an extraordinarily up-to-date culture, culture that was *au fait* with all the latest continental movements in painting and music, as opposed to the scholarliness of the more learned orthodox poets, and second, an uncompromising individualism, an arrogant unconcern with the familiar sweets and throbs of Georgian poetry, a preoccupation with new and abstract values which might have been pose had it not so frequently flashed with genius. The genius, however, was not accorded immediate recognition. That peculiar urge, more recently christened Rimaphobia, which moves retired majors from their roses, mothers of six from their abounding cradles, and traditionalists from the saloon bars of Fleet Street, to write hysterical abuse of any new development in art, moved many reviewers to write of the Sitwells with an almost pathological fervour.

A peculiar malignity of ignorant resentment was aroused by Miss Edith Sitwell's work, as though her culpability in innovation were the greater by reason of her sex. The editress of *Wheels* could hardly have been more bitterly vilified if, instead of writing verse, she had spent her time forging bank-notes.

A more conscientious attempt at interpreting the effect of the new poetry upon a reader still not sufficiently attuned to it to gain more than a superficial idea of its subtle exoticism was displayed by an anonymous critic who catalogued the poets thus:

SITWELL, EDITH: While reading this lady's work one feels as if in a gigantic conservatory lined with mirrors, electric lights blazing from every corner, tom-toms beating ceaselessly while thousands of parrots scream in unison and enormous cats slink after rats, festooning themselves among exotic plants. Jewelled snakes twine in and out, writhing their way up the balustrades. Meanwhile, one or two bishops discuss the weather with drunken clowns and the entire aristocracy looks on approvingly from a far corner. After reading one feels like a circus rider who has jumped through a paper hoop and is now drinking cold tea.

SITWELL, OSBERT: Various metaphors may be applied: A bag of conjuring tricks. A rattle without a handle. A beautiful set of toy teeth in a second-hand shop. Fireworks by daylight. A pin pricking a parachute.

SITWELL, SACHEVERELL: The most promising member of his family. There is depth and insight in his writing, but his mind has the riotous instincts of his brother and sister.

Later in the decade such works as the *Sleeping Beauty* and *Troy Park* by Edith Sitwell, *Southern Baroque Art* and the *Hundred and One Harlequins* by Sacheverell, and *Before the Bombardment* by Osbert, had won all three recognition as being, in their various lines, the purest and most exquisite contributors to the *belles-lettres* of their generation.

In the early days, the warfare between the Georgian and the post-Georgian groups of poets proved to be a stimulus both to writers and readers, second only to that of the War

itself. New periodicals appeared like mushrooms. On the Georgian side, the *Chapbook*, *Voices*, the *Adelphi* and the *London Mercury* were the principal organs, while the modernists ranked themselves in *Coterie*, *Art and Letters*, a new issue of *Blast*, Wyndham Lewis's next paper, the *Tyro*, and the *Calendar* and the *Criterion*.

Of all these periodicals, the *Criterion* was the most significant, and its significance was profound and depressing. T. S. Eliot, its editor, marshalled the young revolutionaries beneath his banner, and led them back through the waste land to an altogether unexpected Canaan of royalism, classicism and anglo-catholicism. Probably no one but he could have achieved this *volte-face* with so little concession to the older generation. Whatever milk his new land flowed with, was certainly not that of human kindness, and its honey had no taste of the lips of Pindar. A cathedral atmosphere permeated the temple of the muses, the leader's tones took on more and more of an ecclesiastical accent, and those young men who had been born in the glittering rowdyism of the post-War Saturday night, now found themselves sober in garb and mien at Mr. Eliot's Sunday morning service.

So the factions died down. The Sitwells' movement took a course which, though gayer, was more or less parallel with that of T. S. Eliot and his followers. The rebels stood revealed as masters of the subtlest forms of traditional poetry. The schools were forgotten, or rather, their members began to diverge as individuals.

One of the first to disentangle himself and saunter away from the general mêlée was Aldous Huxley, whose early verse had formed the fourth great pillar of *Wheels*, and who had not escaped the charges of futurism, pose and madness, although he was completely and charmingly classical from the very first. Huxley was equipped with a delightful combination of scholarship and wit, and after the publica-

tion of two or three volumes of highly polished verse, he seemed to find the confines of poetry too narrow for the easy exercise of his talent, and entered in *Chrome Yellow* upon a flowery path to the wider and more fertile plains of prose.

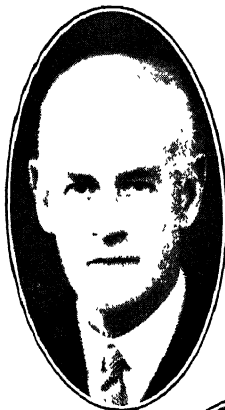
In some cases individualism was not enough: a positive ferocity was paraded as the final sign of having no connexion with the establishment next door. In 1924 Roy Campbell made his first considerable appearance. In this young man's work there was an astonishing fecundity of magnificent and virile images, as well as the naïve and romantic belligerency of the colonial. This first long poem of his, *The Flaming Terrapin*, took the literary world by storm, many poet-critics trumpeted his praises in their second capacity, who were later to suffer his gibes as to their first. The *Georgiad*, in 1931, was in everything but polish a formidable imitation of the *Dunciad*. Certainly it was not far behind its august model in virulence.

In prose, a maturer and much stronger figure bears some analogy to Campbell. Wyndham Lewis was the editor, and almost the entire staff, of *The Enemy*, and though there were not wanting certain scoffers who suggested that Mr. Lewis was too much Thersites' brother to be effectually anybody's enemy but his own, it was felt by many that his violent attacks upon the age had justification as well as power. So much so indeed that he must be set down as one of the half-dozen literary figures that have made the decade what it is. With the appearance of his *The Art of Being Ruled*, *The Lion and the Fox*, and *Time and Western Man* his influence became, though not wide, very intense. Even the *Apes of God*, a satirical novel which, while it displayed all his brilliance of execution, displayed also a narrowness of scope and too personal a note of spitefulness, did not detract seriously from his reputation as a twentieth-century Swift. Lewis's influence, however, was at first a very narrow one.

Thomas Hardy



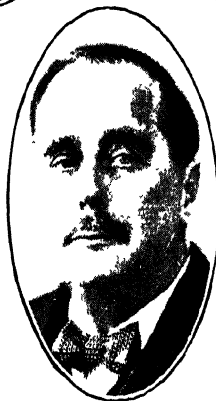
John Galsworthy



Arnold Bennett



H. G. Wells



D. H. Lawrence



Noel Coward



J. B. Priestley



Aldous Huxley

THREE GENERATIONS OF LITERATURE

In the first years of peace the most potent name among the younger prose-writers was that of a foreigner, Anton Tchekov. His stories were read with approval by people of every shade of literary opinion, except perhaps the Extreme Right. Several of his plays were very successfully produced in London. The superb craftsmanship and the profound psychology appealed to the disillusioned young, the melancholy sincerity of his sentiment to the old, who were fearful of losing the ability to feel at all. When Katherine Mansfield, his closest disciple in English, died young, the most cynical regretted the loss to letters, even if the most sentimental celebrated it in the *Adelphi*.

Soon after her death, D. H. Lawrence, her husband's intimate friend, began to win himself a large circle of admirers, and, later, even worshippers. He won his way slowly, but became, at his death in 1930, a classic. Studies and biographies of him began to appear at once. His characteristic feature was his powerful analysis of the sex motive in society, a new version of the *Odi et amo* of Catullus.

During this last period everyone was reading the *Ulysses* of James Joyce. Everyone, that is to say, who could go to Paris, pay the rather high price demanded, and smuggle the book back through the Customs. Joyce was already known as a creditable writer of Irish fiction, but *Ulysses* made him a genius. It was absorbing, enigmatic and contained dozens of experiments in prose. These advanced five years later, in *Anna Livia Plurabelle* and *Haveth Childers Everywhere*, to stages which all but the initiate found incomprehensible. As early as 1919 a woman, Dorothy Richardson, had seen the possibilities for literary art of a reproduction in words of given "streams of consciousness". But Joyce added a musical technique of changes of key, recapitulation and orchestral effects of all descriptions to this idea. It was not easy to read, and the

interpreters, of whom there were many, did not make it easier. By dwelling upon recondite origins of Joyce's patterns and eccentricities, they obscured the very qualities that would have recommended him to a wider audience than those who are mainly interested in style. His magnificent powers of creating character, his astonishing stock of information on everyday affairs, his innumerable and vivid pictures of the familiar sordidness of streets, and his rapid Rabelaisian humour, are qualities more important than his technical experiments, and it is for these that he will be prized long after his experiments have failed, and become out-of-date oddities, or succeeded, and become matters of course.

During the first half of the decade these younger writers were to be seen on the bookshelves of Bloomsbury, the headquarters of the post-War intellectuals. *En passant*, it may be suggested that the transition from pre-War Chelsea, with its beards, cloaks, pint-pots and all the other paraphernalia of the artist (old-style) was very expressive of the general progress. Picturesque squalor had no place behind the Georgian façades of Bloomsbury. Its habitués were smart, intelligent and up to date. Horn-rimmed spectacles rather than beards were their distinguishing feature, and they preferred cocktail parties to saloon bars. Among them, however, certain amiable weaknesses of the Chelsea artists had become matters of theory.

The public which has always been ready to condone weakness, is less favourably disposed to sexual freedoms conducted on principle, and the words Bloomsbury and highbrow gradually acquired an unpleasant significance in the eyes of that large majority which had always had a sentimental affection for the shaggy waifs and strays of Chelsea. This popular resentment extended to the books upon their shelves, especially where these betrayed too close an acquaintance with the Tree of Knowledge. Until

1925 or 1926 the senior novelists held undisputed sway among the reading public. Hardy, Conrad, Wells, Galsworthy and Bennett were all in their late prime, and at the maximum popularity. Three more figures, Hugh Walpole, then Somerset Maugham and then J. B. Priestley carried forward their tradition. On the side of "fine" writing, George Moore, Max Beerbohm and W. H. Hudson still represented our heritage from pre-War days.

In the latter half of the period time and mortality began to undermine the old order. Hardy, Conrad, Bridges, Hudson, Doughty, Edmund Gosse, Harris were dead, as were their kindred spirits, Sargent, Asquith and Balfour. New figures were to fill their places; the question was, who were they to be? Lawrence was definitely one of them: Lewis and Joyce were still caviare to the general. The public turned for a time to David Garnett's calm and clear fantasies, to the bright exuberance of A. E. Coppard, to the pleasant experimentalism of Virginia Woolf, to that super artlessness, the subtle classicism of E. M. Forster, and to American satirists such as Sinclair Lewis and James Branch Cabell, the German philosophers Spengler and Keyserling, the German novelist Feuchtwangler, whose *Jew Süss* commanded a record sale, the Anglophile French litterateur, Maurois, appeared among a galaxy of other stars of cosmopolitan origin, Thornton Wilder, Ludwig, Dreiser, Willa Cather, Paul Morand and others. A movement was to start, however, which, if it did not dim the lustre of these, at least submerged them beneath the onrush of a new host.

It is not improbable that the movement for the "debunking" of history was the origin of the wave of war books that was to come upon us, and it is not impossible that Lady Oxford and Asquith first suggested the possibility of this process in her sensational *Memoirs of flirtations and other amiable weaknesses in high political and social quarters.*

At all events, her tremendous success in 1920 was shortly afterwards repeated on a higher literary level by Mr. Lytton Strachey's *Queen Victoria*, which with its sly humour and scholarly charm delighted all but the most unimaginatively reverent, and began the new fashion in earnest.

By this time that great and burning subject, the War, had been pretty heavily bespread with bunk. The squabbles of autobiographical generals over their own and each other's mistakes, the abstracter questions of whether the German, civil and military, was or was not a demon; whether the French betrayed the English, or the English the French in the defeat of 1914, 1916 and 1918; whether the unsuccessful Gallipoli campaign engineered by Churchill was a stroke of unfortunate genius or still more unfortunate insanity; who won the Battle of Jutland and why—all these points had been used to stress aspects of the War which most people felt were the least important. Broader feelings than the later War poets had dealt with were ripe and overripe for expression, and the fashion for "debunking" made their expression possible.

Edmund Blunden began with *Undertones of War*, which was, as its title suggests, a quiet beginning, though one which was not to be surpassed in depth and beauty by the more sensational works that crowded close upon its heels. Then came the translation of Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*, in which wisps of beauty were tossed in a welter of nauseating detail, poppies and latrines, half-hours of love in deserts of mud and corpses, boyishness defeated amid all the dreary horror of the hateful war machine. It was crude work, but it was what was wanted. It was the War completely and for ever "debunked".

For a time everyone wore spectacles made in Germany. Any version of any contemporary work in the language of that country was sure of a welcome. The supply kept

pace with the demand. Then came in rapid succession Richard Aldington's *Death of a Hero*, in which the spleen of the citizen soldier was vented with a venomous violence that seemed almost bizarre after Remarque's plainer tale: Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*, which, owing to its remoter setting on the Italian front and its American authorship, did not at first reach a very wide public, though two years later it was quoted as model tragedy in the new literary vogue of restrained realism: Robert Graves's autobiography *Good-bye to All That*, in which the most uncompromising of the tall browed rebels discussed the adventures of his soul and body and the characters and activities of many interesting contemporary figures with attractive candour. In 1930 H. M. Tomlinson interpreted his war experiences—*All Our Yesterdays*—through the eyes and with the technique of a distinguished Conradian, while Frederick Manning, the then anonymous author of the curiously named *Her Privates We*, told an even plainer tale than Remarque's.

Such books as these helped to settle the unrest of the post-War years. They induced a deeper mood—for they were all thoughtful in their different ways—in which the axe of contention was at least half-buried and something of the truth about humanity, as both more earthly and more heavenly than had been supposed, could be envisaged. If there were fewer shibboleths there was as much vision in the cooler analysis of those that existed. It could be conjectured that the energetic prose expositions of naked brutality were beginning to congeal in the subconsciousness of the age the ardours of mental rebellion that the reality had kindled. Perhaps the War novelists were to some extent the psycho-analysts who helped to clear up the complexes implanted during the four fatal years.

Among the beliefs that war had shaken and literature debated was, naturally enough, the time-honoured *credo*

about Waterloo and the playing fields of Eton. The English public-school system, so much a *stupor mundi* of pre-War days that Indian and Chinese potentates as well as European financial magnates were among the parents whose progeny were sent to absorb it, was startlingly attacked, not by Wellsian proletarians, as often enough before 1914, but by exemplars of the caste itself. Did the deification of the athlete, as a habit of mind, in fact result in enlightened administration? Did the relation of "fag" to prefect in fact prepare the soul for serviceable citizenship? Was the study of the Greek and Latin classics a sufficient training for the arena of modern problems? In a word, could the sacred principles of serious democracy be really advanced by institutions which turned out young men of such a fundamentally different stamp from their less-favoured coevals?

These questions, and others of a sometimes pleasantly scandalous character, were argued by such men as Alec Waugh, Arthur Machen and John Heygate for the prosecution and Shane Leslie, the Etonian, for the defence. But the public schools continued to have much the same aspect as before. They even increased in numbers and transferred their features to many humbler establishments. It became more and more difficult to tell whether a boy, in holiday time, was a Carthusian or a Mile End Rodian.

Essentially, victory seemed to remain with the conservatives. All that reached a state of incontrovertibility was that a public school was no place for a poet. Though this conclusion left most of the population cold there were signs of modification in the old ideals before the close of 1930. A certain relaxation of discipline, an increase of efficiency in the teaching of science and modern languages, the appointment of comparatively youthful headmasters, were indications that either the wave of criticism or the

more constructive message of such works as Wells's *Sanderson of Oundle* had not been entirely ineffectual.

Prose at the end of the decade was bulkier. Wells had resuscitated the three-decker in *The World of William Clissold*. Best sellers under this and also the voluble German influence, to say nothing of the vast *Ulysses*, now ran into hundreds of thousands of words. There was a craze, too, which met the lust of a hurried age for tabloids and cocktails, for huge "omnibus" collections in one volume of typical selections from one author's work or from work on a single subject, like ghosts or murderers. Prose was also, thanks to Tchekov and Proust, the latter brilliantly translated in these years by Scott Moncrieff, more profoundly analytical and detailed in its psychology. This necessitated the removal of tabus. Lawrence and Joyce had seen to that of sex, of which people began to fear, not the excitement, but the tedium. Joyce had also attacked the inhibitory domination of syntax and grammar. The enigmatic stammering and deliberately infantile repetitions of the even more advanced Gertrude Stein were too wild for the majority. But the American, John Dos Passos, developed the newsreel technique used in parts of *Ulysses* and made it, together with cinematographic effects such as the registering of signs and tokens of emotion at the closest of quarters, an integral instrument of modern literature. Neither poetry nor prose had fought for their freedom so vainly as the literal heroes of 1914-18. The future of the new manner was assured. But once assured it was not seen to be so far divorced from John Donne and Robert Browning, from the picaresque novelists and George Meredith, as it had once seemed.

The written word that conveyed fact rather than emotion had unprecedented popularity in the post-War years. The great name of Einstein was on everyone's lips from 1919 to 1930. His revolutionary principle of relativity had been

verified at the solar eclipse of May the 29th in the former year. The Newtonian mechanics were superseded for ever, except perhaps in orchards. Space and time, motion and shape, were proved relative to velocity. The monistic conception of space-time made both properties of matter. Light was matter. The hypothesis of ether became unnecessary.

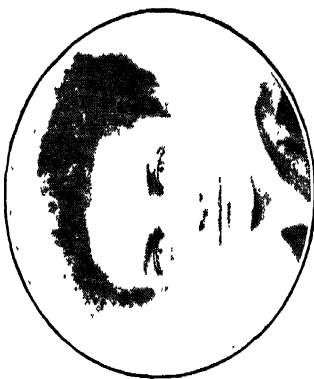
No one but expert mathematicians could understand the proofs. Yet everyone felt that the old notions of the universe order had crashed and that somehow all philosophic values must be recast. The adoption of the theory gave a vague but powerful stimulus to the iconoclasts in every department of life. The Jewish metaphysician's authority was invoked to support sociological, political and even artistic ideas of which he had probably never heard. No up-to-date study or studio was complete without a copy of one of the countless expositions of relativity which were immediately furnished by obliging philosophers, amateur and professional.

It was not long before the new theories had been wrenched into some extraordinary connection with art. The old ideas of the subjectivity of time received new stimulus with the notion that time was after all only a dimension of space, though as a matter of fact this was the one aspect of Einstein's discoveries that was by no means novel.

In the strongholds of the more furiously up to date, there actually appeared paintings that were described as four-dimensional. Even the dead awoke to the new influence, and at a very early stage the deceased mother of the Reverend Vale Owen reassured him with the words, "What you call a fourth dimension does exist here in a way, and that hinders us in describing it adequately."

The popular interest in science was assisted by the fact that science was no longer at daggers drawn with religion. Sir James Jeans himself was shortly to say that the mathematical genius apparent not only in the ordering of space

Jean Forbes-Robertson



John Gielgud



Edith Evans



Charles Laughton



SOME POST-WAR STARS

Sybil Thorndike



Cedric Hardwicke



and time, but also in the construction of the atom, might well be conscious and must be divine. By the end of the decade, Science and the Church had sunk their long quarrel in the dark waters of teleology and the quantum theory.

Very shortly after the War, the public was given its first easy introduction to these abstruse matters in series upon series of publications of Wonders and Outlines in fortnightly parts. A series of essays, attractively entitled, the To-day and To-morrow series, on the future of science, chemistry, mechanics, biology, and intelligence itself, achieved wide popularity on a rather higher level. The *Outline of History* began its colossal sale of two million copies. Mr. Belloc objected and the world hastened to find out why. Mr. Wells replied and Mr. Belloc objected again. In the last phases of the discussion, the participants descended to personalities, and Mr. Wells was generally felt to have hammered home the conclusion that a classical and university education is not essential to a comprehension of the forces that make the scientist's world. Thus encouraged, Mr. Everyman went on to read the *Essays of a Biologist*, by Julian Huxley, *Possible Worlds*, by J. B. S. Haldane, and *The World in 2030*, by Lord Birkenhead, in which he was astonished to find, on comparing it with *Possible Worlds*, which had been published a little previously, how great minds could think with an almost verbatim similarity. Mr. Haldane, however, was courteous enough to ascribe this, in a letter to the Press, as probably being due to a remarkable manifestation of telepathy. Lord Birkenhead had no suggestions as to its cause.

On the lighter, more sensational side, the greatest scientific thrill was undoubtedly Voronoff's claim to be able to provide physical immortality, by grafting the glands of monkeys on human tissue. But though this raised high hopes in the more elderly of the Bright Young People, it

came to nothing in the end but the inevitable monkey humour shown in drawings of rejuvenated old gentlemen in tree-tops. The tomb of Tut-ankh-Amen combined all the pleasures of science, art, and, with its mysterious curse, superstition also, but even with this advantage, it was only slightly more popular than the discoveries of Sir Arthur Evans, at Minos, or the excavations at Ur.

The universal appeal of health and beauty assisted two more discoveries to the widest recognition. Vitamins and ultra-violet rays appealed to the debutante as well as to the crank, and their popular appeal was soon taken up by the advertisers of commercial products. But no single discovery aroused quite the furore that followed upon the psychological pronouncements of Doctor Freud and his school.

The implications of these had a dual and paradoxical effect on the layman. Everything was based on sex—that was disgusting. Sex was the basis of everything—that was thrilling. It became important to be rid of all complexes, and while some who could afford it resorted to psycho-analysis to abolish these, others found in text-books and articles an indication of simpler measures.

All these influences made themselves felt in the theatre. Mr. Bernard Shaw plunged into the biological discussions with his tremendous epic of the life force, "Back to Methuselah". He followed this by an excursion into the popular rationalization of history, in "St. Joan". The new morals were effective in a highly successful play, entitled "The Fanatics", by Miles Malleson, and the public school controversy came before the footlights, as the setting for the aspirations of Young Woodley towards the wife of his house master.

In other respects, the drama had hardly kept pace with the developments in other arts. It could scarcely be said that in 1930, dramatic naturalism had yielded to any other

principle. There were a few experiments in expressionist production, based almost entirely upon the German school. The sexual tabu, as in literature, had largely passed away. But the great successes of the decade, "Saint Joan", Noel Coward's satires, and the distressful sincerity of Sheriff's "Journey's End", were nothing if not realistic. The Irish theatre flashed in the pan when the ex-bricklayer, Sean O'Casey, wearing his famous Fair Isle jumper, bowed to an ecstatic audience, on the first night of "Juno and the Paycock". Other plays followed. "The Plough and the Stars" was received as enthusiastically as its forerunner, but "The Silver Tassie", despite its strangely moving second act, decorated by Augustus John, contained signs that the vein of fancy was running dry. In an attempt to prove the timelessness of great drama, Sir Barrie Jackson produced "Hamlet" and "Macbeth" in modern dress. The attempt was interesting, and most people found it surprisingly likeable, but it was not repeated. The experiment was in accord with the distaste for display, but Shakespeare was to keep his lace collar on for the future. At Hammer-smith, the "Beggar's Opera", written by Gay, two centuries before, and as individual in form to-day as it was when it was written, had had a run which almost rivalled the two thousand nights of "Chu Chin Chow". It was followed, after a less successful revival of its sequel, "Polly", by the equally all-British entertainments "Riverside Nights" and "Tantivy Towers", in which Herbert's Gilbertesque lyrics made him richer, and the audience gayer, than Gay and his manager Rich had ever been. Amongst other actors and actresses, Sybil Thorndike, Edith Evans, Jean Forbes-Robertson, Gwen Ffrangcon-Davies, Cedric Hardwicke, Charles Laughton, John Gielgud and Ralph Richardson sprang into prominence.

On the whole the stage made no such advance as that achieved by literature. But the plastic arts showed an

even greater vitality than that displayed in letters, and a similar ignoring, or defiance of popular taste, and here a still more generous measure of success rewarded the modernists. At first their position was an uncomfortable one. Cubist and futurist, applied indiscriminately, were sure enough of raising a laugh to form a very constant part of the stock-in-trade of the humorous weeklies. When Mr. Jacob Epstein exhibited, in February, 1920, his bronze "Christ", the general criticism was an hysterical accusation of blasphemy—"a sordid travesty of Christian tradition"—that completely ignored the merits of the work as sculpture. The intellectual minority, committed to the doctrine of "significant form", fastidiously avoided any consideration of irrelevant, merely human emotion, and praised the power of simplification in the sharply marked planes of the head, the parallelism of the figure, and so on.

Epstein, however, was fated to become the most roughly handled bone of contention between the old school and the new. The extraordinary competence of his severely traditional work in bronze was never taken into account, either as compensation or as sponsor, for his more experimental productions in stone. When, in 1925, he unveiled in Hyde Park a memorial to the naturalist and distinguished *prosateur*, W. H. Hudson, there was an outburst of popular feeling that showed an enthusiasm for æsthetic values, and a contempt for tolerance and even courtesy, quite surprising in a nation whose restraint is generally considered to exceed its artistic reactions.

Epstein's memorial was a panel carved with the figure of "Rima", one of Hudson's imaginative creations, a character whose spirit was half bird, half woman. Egypt, archaic Greece and modern simplification presided at the conception of this image. The effect was unusual, but no more *outré* than many other works which had been allowed to pass without comment. As sculpture, it was probably

a good second-rate Epstein, i.e. a production infinitely superior to nine-tenths, and probably ninety-nine-hundredths, of the statues that grace the London parks and streets. But Epstein's position as scapegoat for modernism was made onerous by an emotion that had little to do with æsthetic values. It was on moral and even political grounds that the Kaiser had forbidden his Director of Museums to purchase for Germany any of the work of that anarchist, that atheist, Cezanne. Oddly enough, the Kaiser had been more than half right. Much as it would have horrified the conservative and devout old French painter, the movement of which he was the main foundation is profoundly and subtly allied with every iconoclastic development in modern thought. Like the Kaiser, the majors, mothers and pressmen scented this impalpable connection, and *bolshevist*, *blasphemer* and *pervert* were the terms that at once inspired and illuminated their protests. These were to be repeated when the sculptor exhibited "Genesis" at the Leicester Galleries, and in a lesser degree when his figures "Night" and "Day" appeared on the façade of the modernistic headquarters of the underground railway at St. James's Park.

While Epstein suffered throughout the decade, the work of other progressive artists began to make headway very early on. Several influences were at work to assist them. Their theories were lucidly explained by Mr. Roger Fry in *Vision and Design*, and by Mr. Clive Bell in *Art*, and both these books made much of the close connection between even the cubists and the works of the most respectable of the older masters. If they were read by few of the general public, these expositions greatly influenced the art critics, and through them the opinions of a very solid body of thoughtful people. Official recognition was given by the Imperial War Exhibition to John and Paul Nash, the brothers Spencer, William Roberts, and others among

the younger artists. The modern room at the Tate made some startling acquisitions. The Russian Ballet, with its decoration by Picasso and Derain, charmed many whom pictures, unassisted by music and movement, would have left cold. But probably the most effective propaganda of all was carried out by Mr. Frank Pick, the Director of Publicity for the underground railway combine, under whose influence the American, Mr. F. McKnight Kauffer, was commissioned to adorn tube and bus with a series of abstract posters, whose very obvious charm asserted itself after long acquaintance over the general feeling of bewilderment with which they were at first received. Before very long modernism in advertisement was almost the order of the day.

Purely, or even mainly, abstract design experienced its real setback in England rather by reason of a weakness within the ranks of its adherents, than from any very stubborn resistance to its general advance. By 1925 the outposts were carried, and victory was ready for the modernists if they had had a general to lead them to it. But Picassos are extremely rare among a nation more literary than plastic in its deepest reactions. Cubism had been greeted with enthusiasm rather for its value as liberation than as a theory to live by for very long. Meninsky, Gertler, Matthew Smith, Duncan Grant, as well as the War artists already mentioned, began to find a richer source of material in natural forms freely interpreted, than in arbitrary creations of their own. The Chatterton, perhaps the Keats, of modern sculpture had died during the War; and though an account of him by Mr. H. S. Ede, published under the title of *Savage Messiah*, became a best seller at the end of the decade, the influence he might have had remained a hypothetic one. A greater genius, perhaps the greatest in English sculpture, Mr. Henry Moore, appeared to lend his powerful support to abstraction some years

after the battle was over. Among the painters, always more powerful as an influence than sculptors, there was no one of quite this calibre, except for one figure who for some years had occupied a peculiar position. This was Mr. Walter (later Richard) Sickert, who, though he sometimes occupied the most conspicuous position on the walls of the London Group, had been for some years regarded as a belated impressionist by his more advanced juniors, while yet being looked upon as a bizarre revolutionary by the officially academic. During the 'twenties Sickert's prestige grew rapidly in both circles. The Royal Academy received him within its ranks, and the moderns awoke to the fact that he was the only Englishman who was producing work that was indubitably worthy to be classed with the French masters of the last half-century. Thus, though perhaps not the cause of the compromise that followed, he was certainly a major symptom of it.

The conflict had perhaps even done the artistic conscience of the nation good. The great exhibitions of Flemish and Belgian art held in 1927, of Dutch in 1929, of Italian in 1930, of Persian in 1931 and of French in 1932, would possibly never have been attended by so many people had they not been preceded by so much controversy on artistic subjects in the newspapers.

By the close of the decade not only modern painting and sculpture, but architecture and furniture which owed more to Euclid and the machine than to antique temples and baroque interiors were positively popular. Scarcely so much could be said of *vers libre*, emancipated prose or any of the new experiments in stage technique. Nor, decidedly, of the new music.

Wireless telegraphy made even the unmusical follow with zest the battles for atonality and revolutionary theories of harmony. But though Bax and Holst were not so bad and Stravinsky could be stomachied and actually enjoyed

by strong palates, it was long before Bartok, Schönberg, Honegger and Hindemith were even grudgingly recognized as composers able partially to inspire a promising British school represented by William Walton and Constant Lambert. A majority of musical people in 1930 still denied it.

Perhaps the only sphere of the contemplative intelligence which did not evolve from the imitative to the interpretive stage during the decade was that of the screen. Cinematography was the youngest of the arts and its early commercialization stunted its growth. Experiments were continually devised and met with some applause, but not from the masses that make or mar. The sound film of 1930 was better photographed, but scarcely better directed than its silent ancestor of 1920. Yet more of the intelligentsia were going to the palatial buildings erected week by week all over the country, and the genius of Chaplin and Eisenstein was a hardly arguable commonplace before 1931. Interpretive films were on the way to reach the public as non-imitative art; literature and music had already reached it in their various degrees.

On a general survey the period 1920-30 might reasonably be called, so far as the contemplative intelligence was concerned, that in which art grew to attend less to mimesis and more to communication, and science became the guide, philosopher and friend of the nation at large.



MR. JACOB EPSTEIN AND RIMA

CHAPTER XII

FALLEN FINANCIERS

It were an endlesse peece of work, to discover the abhominable life of brokers.

—ROBERT GREENE.

Fallen Financiers—Fraud and Confidence—Horatio Bottomley—"Buy Victory Bonds"—Bigland Against Bottomley—Three Trials—The Puritan as Swindler—Bevan's Flight—The Tact of Clarence Hatry—Thirteen and a Half Millions Lost—Jimmy White—The Super-Man in High Finance.

IF the fraudulent financier has acquired a new importance since the War it is not the importance of a new phenomenon. Jabez Balfour and Whitaker Wright were merely the most eminent of a series of City operators who established long ago the technique of cozenage on the scale made possible by nineteenth-century changes in the distribution of wealth and the growth of an enormous public of investors. "This", says Mr. H. G. Wells, discussing the swindling of the investor, "has been occurring periodically on a large scale throughout the last hundred years, and it has taxed the economic process to the extent of many millions." An even more onerous tax has been on confidence in the economic process that permits its periodical occurrence. There is one comment no judge, passing sentence on a finance-faker, omits—the stern reference to the injury inflicted upon the commercial reputation of the City of London; if the man with money to spare is so disturbed by revelations of the dishonesty of a few individual financiers that he shrinks from risking his capital in any investment, commerce and industry will

be starved of funds; that is the judge's meaning. But a graver injury to confidence is involved. Since the War the economic process of capitalism has had to face an enormous increase of scepticism as to its power to carry on the world's work. The first challenge to the capitalist order—"It isn't fair"—was amplified, long before the War, into, "It isn't fair and it doesn't work"; but only since the War has this grown from a sectional, Socialist dogma, to a misgiving so wide as to be general. It is a misgiving that has chilled even the faith of the capitalist; he knows, he prays, that it may be baseless, but, as discouragement and complexity and dislocation increase, the doubt persists and rankles.

Before the War the capitalist had one enormous advantage. He could retort to the Socialist, "It is all very well to say that capitalism does not work, but in point of fact it is the only system that is working. Show me any country that is ordering its affairs by a non-capitalist process, and we shall be able to compare notes on results." The Bolshevik Revolution robbed the retort of at least some of its force.

So the swindler, that periodically recurrent reminder of weak spots in the capitalist structure, becomes in post-War circumstances a more significant creature than the swindler of a much less critical age. "Frauds" (to return to Mr. Wells's view) "are due simply to bad checking in the business machine . . . are produced by the imperfections of an evolved and still tentative system of defining economic relationships." Characteristically, Mr. Wells is not deeply worried by these imperfections—he urges us briskly to "get on with the task of so reorganizing our methods of direction and payment that all this juggling in the counting-house of human affairs, to the detriment of worker and consumer alike, may become impossible". But it is in their effect on the many who do not share Mr. Wells's belief in the magic of reorganization that the Bevans, the

Hatrys and the Bottomleys grow larger than life-size. Moreover, if there were nothing else new and disturbing about post-War financial scandals, there would be reason for alarm in the rapidity of their succession.

The decade began well, and Peace was two years old before the first shock of the series was administered. It was just before Christmas in 1920 that news came that Farrow's Bank had closed its doors. To about one hundred thousand people, small traders mostly, the news meant that they had lost their life savings or their capital, or both. To the City the failure was insignificant—another "people's bank" had gone the way of many similar will-o'-the-wisps.

Thomas Farrow was, for a fraudulent financier, a well-meaning man, an altruist and reformer. He had been private secretary to W. H. Smith when Smith was leader of the House of Commons, and to Robert Yerburgh, an M.P. whose theories of banking he absorbed. Later, as an official of the Agricultural Banks Association, he exposed the evils of usury in a series of books which were largely responsible for the passing of the first Moneylenders Act. Then he conceived the idea of founding a bank that would help the small trader in the matter of credits and give the working man a higher rate of interest than was offered by the Post Office or the joint-stock banks. He launched his million-pound scheme in 1904, and the capital was subscribed readily enough by the people whom the bank was intended to benefit. For sixteen years the dream of security lasted; and then the thousands of Farrow's depositors woke up to the uncomfortable reality of three and sixpence in the pound as their share of what assets were left.

The collapse came about in a curious fashion. The prosperity of the business was kept before the world by *Farrow's Bank Gazette*—indeed, it was only in the pages of this publication that the prosperity had any existence. So successful was the *Gazette* in its mission of propaganda

that it attracted the attention of a financial house, Norton, Read & Company, of New York and London; they decided to acquire control of a flourishing business. Mr. Read interviewed Farrow and his co-director, William Walter Crotch, his favourable impression was confirmed, and he became managing director. It was not until he had taken up his duties that he began to discover the truth—or part of the truth; he called in an accountant to tell him the rest.

The bank was hopelessly insolvent, and had been insolvent for some time. Instead of the prosperity indicated by the balance sheet of June, 1920, there was a deficit of £2,800,000. This, to say the least, hardly seemed to justify the dividend of six and a half per cent. which had been declared, and it was mortifying intelligence for a financier of New York and London who had been congratulating himself on a good stroke of business. It was unlikely that Mr. Read's annoyance was lessened by Farrow's explanation. The altruist had hoped that, once Mr. Read found himself enmeshed he would persuade his firm to find enough money to save the bank from collapse; sixteen years' experience of banking had produced strange modifications of altruism. There was as little comfort in Crotch. "Well," he told Mr. Read, "the game appears up. We had been sitting on this thing for years. When you turned up we thought our troubles were ended. Instead of that, they were only beginning."

He added, "There is one consolation. I shall now find time to write a series of books." Clearly someone in Farrow's Bank had already spent a great deal of time on writing a series of books.

With Crotch and the bank's accountant, Frederick Duncan Tabrum Hart, Farrow went to the Old Bailey—leaders of a post-War procession. Horatio Bottomley, the next conspicuous figure in the procession, had already

prepared for his appearance by an invitation, far more blatantly seductive than any Farrow had concocted, to people of the same type as the Farrow's Bank victims. "Buy Victory Bonds. One pound gives you an opportunity of winning £20,000. The British Empire is your security. You cannot possibly lose your money." Ninety thousand people tumbled over each other in their haste to share in the benefits of the magical scheme. Three years later they received 3.38*d.* for each pound they had invested.

It was fantastic. But the creator of the Victory Bond Club and allied schemes moved in a world where all the facts were fantastic. It was incredible that a tailor's presser should have become, with no other assistance than that of his native shrewdness and audacity and a certain crude eloquence, a prophet and leader to hundreds and thousands of his countrymen. But for the War, it might have been impossible. Patriotism had provided him with his last, and best, refuge. He had begun the War with a false step—on the eve of hostilities *John Bull*, the weekly paper of which he was then the editor, had shouted a protest against intervention, "To Hell with Servia!"—but the blunder was retrieved in the following week's issue. For four years Bottomley cried "Havoc!" and let loose the dogs of war more lustily than any other whipper-in of that scratch pack. *John Bull* became the "Soldier's Bible", and its editor was officially invited to visit his congregation in the trenches. And after the War it seemed likely that Bottomley's power, which rested on the shifting foundation of mob-loyalty, was to be stabilized by new alliances with industry and finance. Lord Rothermere, electioneering for his Anti-Waste Party, found the Independent Member for South Hackney a useful *condottiere*, and when, after a constituency or two had been stampeded by joint action, the associates fell out, it was Bottomley who asserted his strength. His candidate defeated the

Rothermere candidate at the first encounter—and this in spite of the fact that his most energetic agent had gone over to the Anti-Waste forces and had organized a particularly rough reception for the “Old Man” at a by-election meeting. Bottomley bitterly resented this and the fact that he survived it was a grateful proof that his credit with the mob was still sound. Lord Rothermere appeared to be impressed, and there were hints of a renewal of the alliance. Then Reuben Bigland intervened.

When, on October 4, 1921, the newspapers announced that Reuben Bigland had been arrested on a warrant from Bow Street charging him with a criminal libel on Mr. Horatio Bottomley, M.P., a bookmaker from Birmingham became a personage of national importance. But, naturally, his importance was not immediately obvious. His manner and appearance did not suggest dedication to the purifying of public life, and he seemed to be meagrely equipped for an attack on a “Tribune of the People”, who was the editor of two newspapers as well as being a leader of a Parliamentary group. The warrant for his arrest was taken out on Bottomley’s behalf by a prominent King’s Counsel, Sir Ernest Wild. The alleged libel was contained in a pamphlet which Bigland had written and distributed, entitled “The Downfall of Horatio Bottomley, M.P. His Latest and Greatest Swindle. How he gulled poor subscribers to invest in his great Victory Bond Club.” There was no evidence that the confidence of the poor subscribers was at first seriously shaken—after all, they knew the British Empire was their security; they could not possibly lose their money.

The simple and sufficiently attractive idea behind the Victory Bond Club, the War Stock Combination and the Thrift Bond Club, was that of periodical drawings in which shareholders might win large money prizes—“one pound gives you an opportunity of winning £20,000”. Of the

money received from the ninety thousand subscribers, five hundred thousand pounds was actually invested in bonds, which were deposited at a bank. There were no disinterested Trustees of the Clubs, and the only people authorized to draw cheques were Bottomley and two of his clerks. This authority was exercised with conscientious assiduity.

But when Reuben Bigland made his first appearance at Bow Street the secrets of the Clubs were still agreeably mysterious. Before the proceedings had lasted many hours Bigland's prophecy of the downfall of Horatio Bottomley, M.P., had been translated into fact, although its complete fulfilment was delayed. Bottomley met the questioning of Bigland's counsel, Mr. Comyns Carr, about Victory Bond Club finance with characteristic assurance, but the case was too desperate to be saved by effrontery. There was evidence that the prosecution had hinted that they were prepared to accept an apology from Bigland, and the magistrate, Sir Chartres Biron, made some very caustic comments on this and other aspects of the case. Bottomley alleged that on one occasion in 1919 Bigland had forced his way into his bedroom at an hotel and had demanded £60,000 as "hush-money". Sir Chartres observed, "Bottomley certainly met this in a peculiar way. His reply was, 'You had better see my friends about it.' The simple expedient of sending for a policeman does not seem to have occurred to him."

As to a second charge against Bigland of demanding money with menaces, Sir Chartres said, "I do not believe the blackmail prosecution is an honest and *bona fide* prosecution. I shall declare Bigland not guilty on that charge. I am unable to believe Bottomley on his oath." The magistrate found, however, that there was a case to answer on a further charge that Bigland incited others to libel Bottomley; he sent this case to the Shropshire Assizes, and committed Bigland for trial at the Old Bailey on the first charge of criminal libel.

When the hearing at the police court had opened crowds of loyal members of the Victory Bond Club had assembled in Bow Street to cheer Bottomley's arrival, but before Sir Chartres Biron had come to his decision the enthusiasm had dwindled. The poor subscribers were acquiring a new and painful realization of their poverty. They had to wait two months, until the January sessions at the Old Bailey, for the next stage of disturbing enlightenment. Naturally, anticipation was acute, and the trial opened before a packed court. Outside the pavements were crowded with admirers of the "Tribune of the People", waiting for news of his belated vindication.

Mr. Justice Coleridge took his seat on the bench. At the barristers' table Mr. Comyns Carr waited to resume the attack he had begun at Bow Street. Bottomley's counsel, Sir Edward Marshall Hall, rose, and the court listened for the first words of the case for the prosecution.

Instead Sir Edward asked for an adjournment. The lion among advocates roared, for once, as gently as any sucking dove—he made his astonishing proposal in a voice so quiet that those at the back of the court could not hear what he was saying. He argued that an adjournment was necessary for the attendance of certain witnesses, and also in order that documents relating to "very great undertakings" should be investigated in proper detail and a more intimate record than that available should be put before the court. An adjournment was refused. It would have been surprising if it had been granted, but a still greater surprise was to come with Sir Edward's next words. As Bigland, he said, had pleaded not guilty, he did not propose to give him the opportunity of reading the fifty-seven pages of his plea of justification; therefore no evidence would be offered by the prosecution.

Bigland left the dock, his purpose still unaccomplished. Bottomley drove away without a cheer from the crowd.

The Victory Bond subscribers went home, sorely perplexed. It was a month later before the next stage, in the Assize Court at Shrewsbury, was reached. The shifting of the scene requires a word of explanation. In November, 1920, Bottomley went to Shropshire to support the candidature of General Townshend, the defender of Kut, in the Wrekin by-election; Bigland had followed him thither and, according to the indictment, had incited three of Bottomley's election workers to extort money from Bottomley. The judge at Shrewsbury was Mr. Justice Darling. Bottomley, who had been represented at Bow Street by Sir Ernest Wild, and at the Old Bailey by Sir Edward Marshall Hall, now had Mr. Cecil Whiteley, K.C., as his leading counsel. But, on the other side, the redoubtable Mr. Comyns Carr was still there, and his first step in Bigland's defence was to comment on the fact that Bottomley, although present in court, was not to give evidence.

The substance of the charge against Bigland was that he told the three election workers that he intended to supply people at outdoor meetings with “a pamphlet showing up Bottomley properly”, and that he suggested that “Bottomley would rather pay £50,000 than lose the election”. In the early stages of the trial Bottomley's hopes of rehabilitation seemed brighter than at any time since the disastrous days at Bow Street. Mr. Comyns Carr was baulked of his chief target for cross-examination—Bottomley himself—and his attack on the evidence for the prosecution was hampered.

Then Bigland went into the witness-box. He deposed that during the by-election he sent a long telegram to Bottomley:

“I heard a voice from Heaven and it said, ‘Confess’. It was the spirit of William Lotinga urging me to unmask England's greatest humbug, a man that takes the name of the Lord to mask his terrible sins. I shall deliver

myself up to justice next week and I am handing you £1,000 Loan Bond which will clear my conscience."

The opening phrase in the telegram was a sardonic reference to a description which had appeared in the *Daily Mirror*, over Bottomley's signature, of the burial of the Unknown Warrior in Westminster Abbey; it began with the words, "I heard a voice from Heaven saying unto me, 'Write'." When this had been explained Bigland was asked the meaning of the reference to the £1,000 Loan Bond. He answered: "In 1918 Bottomley persuaded me to balance an account in which I had lent him thousands by becoming a party to a swindle in the War Stock Combination"; Bottomley, he said, had arranged that he should draw the third prize in the Combination. The third prize was £1,000.

The trial ended in tense excitement, which was enhanced by a special warning from the judge against attempts to interfere with the jury. And then came the verdict—not guilty. Reuben Bigland had achieved the downfall of Horatio Bottomley, M.P. He disappeared from public notice as suddenly as he had entered it; he could afford to leave the completion of his task to the Director of Public Prosecutions.

A few days later that official received a letter in which Bottomley, "as a public man", formally invited him to send a representative to inspect every available document relating to the Bond clubs. The invitation was not accepted, but on March 8, 1922, Bottomley was summoned to appear at Bow Street to answer a charge of having fraudulently converted to his own use five thousand pounds received from subscribers to the Victory Bond Club. From Bow Street the path led to the Old Bailey—a path obscured by long and intricate financial statements and much technical evidence. Among the accusations made by the Crown

was one that on the security of the £500,000 worth of Bonds actually bought Bottomley had raised £100,000, and had applied the money to the purchase of newspapers; and another that he had drawn a cheque for £25,000 on the Victory Bond Club account, and had used £22,500 for his own purposes, which included the purchase of champagne and the upkeep of his racehorses.

Bottomley acted as his own counsel, and in the last desperate hours of the trial strove to exert upon the jury the rhetorical power that had made all the incredibilities of his career possible. "I am pleading for my liberty," he said. "Think of the position I am in. For months past, regardless of expense, the Crown has been engaged in building up this case. All the limbs of the law have been invoked to ransack the details of these wretched clubs, and then I, a busy man who never knew much about the detail of their business, simply regarding myself as the trustee for the administration of the funds, have been asked detailed questions, and in some cases could not give a detailed answer. . . . I will quote, as applicable to myself, the lines of Shakespeare:

My honour and my life are one;
Take honour from me and my life is done.

I do not want my liberty or my life if I have defrauded anybody. Even if to-night the terrible verdict of guilty came from your lips I still believe something would happen to undo it. I do not think you dare, in honour of your oath, say that word to me. If you do, then I am living in a world apart from this earth. . . . There is much more behind this case than you know of. When on Monday you set me free you will hear a great deal of it in the House of Commons. . . . The jury is not yet born which will convict me on these charges."

The jury doubtless considered the prisoner's plea to

"think of the position" he was in; they also thought of the position of the subscribers to the "wretched clubs"—those investors who could not lose their money. After the verdict Mr. Justice Salter told Bottomley, "You have been rightly convicted of this long series of heartless frauds. These poor people trusted you and you robbed them of £150,000 in ten months. The crime is aggravated by your high position, by the number and poverty of your victims, and by the trust they reposed in you. You will go to prison for a term of seven years."

The "Tribune of the People" was not utterly crushed. "I was under the impression", he said, "that before sentence was passed an accused person was asked if he had anything to say."

"Not in the case of a misdemeanour."

"Had it been so I should have had something rather offensive to say about your summing up."

It was his last word. In the Court of Criminal Appeal he sat silent while his counsel, Mr. Disturnell, criticized the summing up. But the arguments were in turn criticized by Mr. Justice Bray and Mr. Justice Roche from the bench. An argument that the jury on whom Bottomley had expended his eloquence was not properly constituted—because a man sworn under the name of Robert Cousins was really named Robert Symonds—also failed.

A week or two later the leader of the House of Commons, Mr. Austen Chamberlain, moved, "That Horatio Bottomley, M.P., should attend in his place on Tuesday, the second of August; that the Governor of Wormwood Scrubs Prison should bring Horatio Bottomley in custody to the House if Bottomley should so desire." Bottomley did not appear. A writ was issued for a by-election in the division of South Hackney.

Neither Farrow nor Bottomley had been of any significance to the City. Indeed, their ignominy had been the

City's advantage, they served as warnings to the investing public of the folly of unorthodox finance; the collapse of Farrow's Bank exhibited by contrast the impregnability of the great joint-stock banks, and Bottomley was an advertisement for the accepted media of small investments, the insurance companies and the building societies. But Bottomley had not been long in Maidstone Prison before another prisoner arrived there, a prisoner so dissimilar in history, in background, in range and methods of operation, that it seemed paradoxical that both men should be under sentences of seven years for fraud. Bottomley had emerged from the mean streets of north-east London, with no family history beyond his claim to a spiritual affiliation with Bradlaugh, the freethinker; Bevan was a member of an old banking family, born into the ruling class in the City. Bottomley had sharpened his wits in the tailor's workshop, in solicitors' offices, on the racecourse and on the hustings; Bevan was Eton and Trinity. Bottomley's noisy denunciations of "prudes on the prowl" had made him the spokesman of the average, sensual man, and if *John Bull*, under his editorship, was outraged by D. H. Lawrence, it was the avowed enemy of "Puritan restrictions"; Bevan was remarkable for his astringent piety, his zealous opposition to the indulgences of alcohol and tobacco. Bottomley's collapse brought down a ramshackle edifice which any conservative financial surveyor would have certified, from its beginnings, as a dangerous structure; but when Bevan toppled over he brought substantial business houses crashing about his own ears and those of sundry persons of importance. And, where Bottomley had fought desperately on the retreat for many months, Bevan had taken to head-long flight at the first hint of exposure.

From the beginning of his career Bevan had had the advantage of association with a firm of stockbrokers of which the credit was inadequately indicated by such words

as "reputable" and "old-established"; as senior partner in Ellis and Company he was an Olympian, and the shareholders of the City Equitable Fire Insurance Company found it very comforting to have so safe and austere a chairman. And Bevan's control soon stirred confidence into a much livelier sense of gratitude. In 1916 the City Equitable paid the astonishing dividend of eighty-eight per cent. Then came one hundred per cent.—one hundred and fifty per cent.—two hundred per cent. The City "lay, all Danaë" to this shower of gold, and, like Danaë, lived to learn that an Olympian visitation may have consequences as long-drawn-out and embarrassing as the cruder forms of seduction. There was a feverish scramble for City Equitable stock which sent the company's four-shilling shares rocketing up to £12 10s. each. It might have seemed too good to be true, but it was impossible to doubt the integrity of a board of directors of which Lord Ribblesdale, the Earl of March and Sir Douglas Dawson, the State Chamberlain, were members, and Bevan himself was unimpeachable in public propriety; those who saw him in his City offices found him as soothingly circumspect as he was brilliantly enterprising. At his country place, Littlecote, he entertained with well-bred magnificence, but there was no indication of expenditure beyond the means of a man who was known to be worth a couple of millions; the moral zealot was mellowed by the Old Etonian, the business man was also a cultivated judge and collector of pictures—altogether Gerard Lee Bevan was a handsomely impressive figure.

Then, suddenly, the monument of integrity crumbled. The four-shilling shares that had soared to £12 10s. slumped to zero—the speed of their rise was as nothing to the rapidity of their fall. To make matters worse, the shares, like those of many banks and insurance companies, were not fully paid and thus there was the serious liability of a

call on each share. Holders tried to give their shares away with a gift of ten shillings per share as a cover for the contingent liability. There were no takers, and in the end the luckless shareholders had to pay £300,000.

When the doors of Ellis and Company closed the City was dumbfounded; it was still more deeply shocked and scared by the news that the senior partner had disappeared. Bevan had departed for France, with a Frenchwoman as his travelling companion. A few people had known that his asceticism did not extend to sex, and some of those in the secret had helped to make his indulgence more expensive by blackmailing him; now every newspaper ferreted out the details of his entanglements, and this aspect of his notoriety claimed as much interest as the fact that he was a fugitive swindler. For three months he remained a fugitive, while the police of every country searched for him. He was nearly trapped in Naples. The Brussels police missed him by minutes. Then, in June, the hunt was ended by the arrest in Vienna of "Leon Vernier", a heavily bearded man who described himself as a French artist. The quondam temperance reformer was intemperate in his annoyance at the failure of his disguise, and made a violent attack on the officers who arrested him; and he declined to give the examining magistrate any information concerning the £2,500,000 deficit of the City Equitable, declaring that the amount was grossly exaggerated and that, in any case, his co-directors must take their share of the responsibility. He moderated his defiance, however, during his two months of waiting in a Vienna prison for the process of extradition to be completed. From his cell he wrote to a friend: "When the crash came I had not the moral courage to face it. I was not thinking of myself, but my family. I could not remain there and see the world point the finger of scorn at the relatives of a ruined and disgraced financier. It was panic made me fly."

The panic had been overcome by the time the detectives brought him back to London. A crowd waited at Waterloo Station to see his homecoming, but, tired though he was, he walked down the platform, erect, composed and smiling. The composure never left him through the long magisterial hearing at the Guildhall or during the days in the dock at the Old Bailey. Sir Richard Muir put the Crown case before the magistrates; in the City Equitable balance sheet £350,000 was shown as owing by Ellis and Company, but the actual figure of the debt was £910,961. There was no particular originality in the method of the fraud—Bevan had been taking money from one till to make up another and in the end there was not a till that had not been tampered with. At the Old Bailey Bevan listened to one after another of his former colleagues on the board of the City Equitable testifying against him. One director was absent—Lord Ribblesdale, whose health had broken under the strain of anxiety. Another director, the Earl of March, who had been crippled in the War, entered the court on crutches, and Bevan's counsel, Mr. Henry Maddocks, K.C., spared him the fatigue of cross-examination. One after another, the directors went into the witness-box to tell the same story of good intentions nullified by insufficient experience. They had conscientiously attended board meetings, had accepted all Bevan's explanations, and had signed the cheques he had put before them. In the defence Mr. Maddocks made much of the fact that the manager of the insurance company, who had received sums amounting to £100,000, had not been called by the prosecution; and against the fact that Bevan had signed nine cheques for his own benefit he set the fact that the other directors had signed forty-three such cheques.

But when Bevan had stepped into the aeroplane that bore him and his French companion across the Channel he had condemned himself. He said in the witness-box,

"I was asked to go"—but he did not say by whom, and Mr. Justice Avory commented destructively on this explanation in his summing-up. There may have been some small consolation for the financier in the fact that he was not the only target of the judge's asperity; Sir Horace could discover in only one director, a Mr. Milligan, any appearance of having realized what his duties were, and in Mr. Milligan's case enlightenment had been too late to be effective.

The verdict against Bevan and the sentence of seven years penal servitude was not the end of the story. That was not reached even when civil proceedings in court after court had disentangled the knotted affairs of Ellis and Company (with liabilities £2,557,292 and assets £383,957) and the City Equitable. Financial houses that had not a penny involved directly were damaged by the timidity that followed the Bevan revelations. The poor could not afford Bottomleys; the rich could not afford Bevan's. Not since the days of Whitaker Wright and the London and Globe Company frauds had there been such a blow to public confidence, but only seven years were to elapse before the thirteen and a half million Hatry debacle made Bevan's misappropriations dwindle to the scale of an apprentice's raid on the till.

Before Bevan had assumed control of the City Equitable the company had been reorganized by a young man who attracted some attention by the success of this, his first big deal. At the age of twenty-three Clarence Charles Hatry decided that the opportunities and salary of an insurance clerk were disproportionate to his abilities, and, with no equipment beyond a gambler's astuteness and a gambler's courage, he set up in business as an insurance broker. That was in 1912. Within two years he had brought off a £250,000 coup, and there were better things to come. He did well out of the War, and by the time the world had been made safe for democracy it had also been made

extremely comfortable for Clarence Hatry, the holder, at thirty, of directorships in fifteen companies. He was the complete *parvenu*, and the mansion in Great Stanhope Street on which he spent seventy thousand pounds had the naïve magnificence of a Hollywood "set", even to the gorgeous detail of a swimming pool; his sumptuous, sound-proof offices had the same somewhat fabulous air; his race-horses assisted the legend of the financier who commanded success, whoever might deserve it. He was a representative figure of the post-War boom years, a moment when fastidiousness would have been a handicap and when Hatry's blend of suppleness and audacity had its maximum scope. Suppleness was, indeed, the quality on which he prided himself. "You know," he told a friend, "personality plays a greater part in business than any amount of solid reputation; tact and discretion do a good deal more than big talking."

As for his daring, he was to prove that in 1920 with a deal involving eight and a half millions—the purchase of the world's largest jute factory and five others in Dundee. While this, in terms of figures, was the greatest of all his transactions, it was not so ambitious as his next big venture, the acquisition of the Commercial Bank of London, through which great enterprises such as Agricultural Industries, Limited, British Glass Industries, Limited, and Leyland Motors, Limited, did business. The capital of the bank alone was five millions. But the boom was breaking; there were whispers in the City that all was not well with Hatry; the Commercial Bank of London became the Commercial Corporation of London, and the banking side of the business was given up; and then, after two years of desperate manœuvring, the shareholders decided to wind up the concern and cut their losses. Hatry faced his first defeat with courage. He told the shareholders that he had decided to waive all his claims against the Corporation;

thus shouldering £750,000 liabilities. "If there have been any mistakes," he said, "I accept my full responsibility for them. Had I retired, as I might have done, before the trade depression came I could have been a rich man, but I thought it my duty to remain with the Corporation in bad as well as good times. I have not only parted with my private means, but I have taken on future responsibilities and liabilities solely for the benefit of the Corporation." His resolution had its reward, and a failure that might have ended his career imposed only a momentary interruption.

The first undertaking of Hatry's second phase was the flotation of Corporation and General Securities, Limited, a company for the purpose of negotiating corporation loans; it was a daring intrusion upon territory held by a few jealously exclusive houses, and even Hatry's admirers doubted his success. Once again personality proved an acceptable substitute for solid reputation, and the concern prospered—for a time. Later it was to form one of the walls of a financial tomb. Then Hatry turned to the drapery trade and formed a trust composed of some of the oldest and most powerful firms in the trade; from drapery he moved on to iron and steel and two more great combines involving eleven million pounds. His talents were purely acquisitive, and even if he had never transgressed the legal limits of business operation he would have incurred the displeasure of Mr. H. G. Wells as a "wealth-grabber".

The second phase was the last. Its *dénouement* came on September 21, 1929—a Friday which is established as an unhappily memorable date in the City—when Hatry and three of his associates, Edmund Daniels, John C. Dixon, and Albert Tabor, were arrested on the charge of obtaining £209,141 by conspiracy and false pretences from the Porchester Trust, Limited, and Mr. G. H. Russell, a stockbroker who had acted for the Trust. Just before

they were arrested three of the men had taken out passports; another associate of Hatry's of whom a great deal was to be heard later, John Gialdini, had already departed for his native Italy. At the first hearing of the charges at the Guildhall it was said that Hatry and his colleagues had confessed to depositing worthless scrip purporting to be £150,000 Wakefield Corporation Stock as security for the money obtained from the Porchester Trust, and at the trial a curious story was told by the defence to account for the existence of the forged scrip. In the previous June, when the Hatry group was facing a situation that was already desperate, the five directors met in Hatry's office, and Gialdini—so the story went—suggested the expedient of forgery to tide over the crisis. The other directors professed to have been appropriately shocked by the proposal, whereupon Gialdini threatened to blow his brains out if they did not agree. They decided to prolong his life and the lives of their insolvent companies.

The arrests caused a panic. Shares which had stood at 13s. 6d. slumped to 2s. 6d. Securities which had been worth ten millions became a drug on the market. Dealings in certain stocks were suspended until the truth about them was known. And the truth, as it came out in the evidence of Sir Gilbert Garnsey, the accountant, was terrifying; he announced that the total liabilities of the six companies forming the Hatry group were £29,000,000, and the total deficit was estimated at £13,500,000; one company alone, Austin Friars, Limited, had liabilities of £19,000,000, and at no time in its history had it been solvent. "There will be little, if anything, for the unsecured creditors," said Sir Gilbert. "There will be nothing for shareholders." It was the corporation securities business, that triumph of "personality", that was mainly responsible for bringing Hatry to grief—a grief that was shared by some hundreds of thousands of ratepayers who had to make good his

defalcations. Wakefield, Liverpool and Newcastle were the chief sufferers.

The Guildhall hearing and the Old Bailey trial presented the usual paradox of financial "sensations", the overwhelming of the sensational element by endless figures. The conspirators' method had been the familiar one of transferring securities to one toppling concern from another that was not in such immediate danger. The defence at the Old Bailey urged that Hatry and his associates were unfortunate, but not criminal, that they had acquiesced in forgery with the loftiest intentions—a defence that imposed no strain on the Attorney-General's powers of destructive argument. It was not a surprise when, after the four men had given evidence, the plea of "Not guilty" was withdrawn, and one of "Guilty" substituted. Eight years earlier, in the same court, Mr. Justice Avory had portentously rebuked Bevan for his treason to the commercial reputation of the country, and he now told Hatry, "You have been found guilty of the most appalling fraud that ever disfigured the commercial reputation of this City." The sentences recognized Hatry's pre-eminence; his penalty was fourteen years' penal servitude, while Daniels, Dixon and Tabor received seven, five, and three years respectively. There was a certain sentimental reaction in Hatry's favour because of the weight of his punishment, but it did not extend to the Appeal Court, where the Lord Chief Justice told Hatry's counsel that the sentence was "not a day too much".

In the meantime John Gialdini was still on holiday in Milan, and beyond the reach of extradition. Not, however, beyond the reach of Italian law. When he found that he was in danger in his own country he did his best to efface himself in various disguises, including that of a priest, but he was captured in March, 1930, and lodged in San Vittore prison in Milan. The one mitigation of his

misfortune was that his cell companions were two fraudulent bankers. "After all," he said, "I might have had to sleep with a couple of cut-throats." A touching expression of *esprit de corps*. Fifteen months later he was tried. He denied complicity in the frauds, and declared that the story of his threat of suicide was pure invention; but he was found guilty, sentenced to four years and ten months' hard labour, and his Italian property was ordered to be sequestrated. The sentence was altered on appeal to one of two years.

There were minor tremors in store for the City—the public disagreement between the shipowning brothers, Lord St. Davids and Lord Kysant, over the affairs of the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company, and the subsequent conviction of Lord Kysant of issuing a misleading prospectus, for which he was sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment; and the failure of Sir Arthur Wheeler, the largest "outside broker" in the country. But, so far as Britain was concerned, Hatry's thirteen million collapse had set up an unapproachable standard in financial aberration.

The terminations of two other careers require to be mentioned, for both had repercussions on confidence. There was no examination by judge, counsel and jury of the affairs of James White. His suicide in June, 1927, saved the State so much trouble and expense. White's history was that of a crude, shrewd, grasping man who made money in ways that were of no benefit to society and got rid of it in ways that were equally unprofitable; inevitably, therefore, his career was popularly considered "romantic". He began earning his living at the age of ten in his native Rochdale. According to the legend, his ambition was first stirred, when he was a boy messenger, by a visit to a circus, and he resolved to become a circus proprietor; he first became a bricklayer, but when he was nineteen he had an opportunity of buying a travelling

circus for a hundred pounds, and he raked the money together and floated his first company. He made money out of the show for a couple of years before he sold out, and used his capital to buy out and ruin a master builder against whom he had a grudge dating from his bricklaying days. An attempt to exploit the negro boxer, Jack Johnson, was not so successful, for the Home Office would not allow Johnson to defend his world's championship against Bombardier Wells at Earl's Court, and the veto cost White six or seven thousand pounds.

All this was merely a prelude to the fulfilment of more spectacular ambitions. He went into the City and made the City take notice of him when he bought the Covent Garden estate from the Duke of Bedford for eight million pounds. A series of big flotations followed and established the Rochdale bricklayer as an exceptionally hard-headed gambler; the general public began to know him as "Jimmy" White, owner of theatres and racehorses. When *Ivanhoe* won the *Cesarewitch* and White won a hundred thousand pounds his national importance was no longer in doubt. To the millions whose daily escape from boredom is provided by a shilling bet on a horse, James White, who betted in thousands and betted on everything, was a legendary figure. People told how he had risked thirty thousand pounds on the rolling of a penny towards a sixpence placed on the floor. They told of the entertainments at Foxhill, his Wiltshire estate, where racing celebrities and actresses were diverted by badger-baiting, cock-fighting, coursing, boxing, football, and donkey races with girl jockeys. A good many of the stories were true, and some were printable.

But the legend of the successful gambler, while very useful to White, was not as useful as actually consistent success would have been. He lost a million in a reorganization of the Dunlop rubber interests, and there were various

other flotations in which his readiness to take risks proved expensive. The final gamble, which was to have paid for everything, was in oil. Among the friends White had made in the City were Sir Edgar Mackay Edgar and Mr. W. B. Mitford, and he joined them in launching a £9,000,000 company, British Controlled Oilfields. Before long the alliance developed into a struggle for the control of the company, and by way of securing domination White took up heavier commitments than he could afford, as well as inducing friends to take up shares. On a certain Tuesday, the eve of settling day on the Stock Exchange, he was called on to pay for more than a million shares in British Controlled Oilfields which his brokers refused to carry on any longer. He appealed to his bankers, unsuccessfully. Next day hundreds of thousands of the shares were thrown on the market, with the result that, instead of the rise which White hoped would restore his fortunes, the price fell by 5s. 6d. a share—a loss of £250,000 on White's holding in one day. When all his frantic calls for help to bankers, brokers and friends, had failed, White shut himself in his bedroom at Foxhill and drank chloroform and prussic acid. Only a few hours earlier an old associate had telephoned to promise him the assistance he needed, but White, thinking the call was from one of his many frightened creditors, did not answer the telephone.

"It was a rotten business, but what could I do?" said Sir Edgar Mackay Edgar. "One of us had to go under."

White made his own comments on the rotten business in a valedictory letter. Among much sentimental remorse, this contained a passage sufficiently characteristic to be worth quoting:

"I have entertained royalty, I have called dukes and earls by their pet names, been on the inside of politics, owned a yacht, run a racing-stud, raised over

£150,000,000 for undertakings, made more than £750,000 in a day, have given large sums to charity, and have been fêted by all and called Jimmy White by a world of people."

One achievement overlooked by this recital is that he died owing £1,700,000 in income-tax.

Whatever romantic excesses James White was able to boast of were paltry beside Alfred Loewenstein's fabulous magnificence. The history of this Belgian multi-millionaire is relevant to this chapter only because the manner of its ending inflicted a shock on nervous markets comparable to those inflicted by huge frauds. But there was no suggestion that Loewenstein himself transgressed the legal limits of financial operation, and though he had heavy losses in the last months of his life he was far from being ruined. He had become a millionaire, mainly by enterprising South American flotations, long before readers in this country heard of him, which was not until several years after the War. Then he emerged as a creature of overpowering impressiveness, a reproach to the timidity of sensational fiction, the most flamboyant contemporary expression of the arrogance of money. He was a human vehicle for the notion of international finance as the new world-ruling power, superseding kings and governments and military conquerors, in himself an "economic interpretation of history". After he had fallen, one day in July, 1928, from his private aeroplane into the Channel, his symbolic stature suddenly contracted—it seemed probable, after all, that he had been just one more adventurer (although on an exceptionally bold scale), a separable accident of economic evolution rather than an essential link: but while he was alive it was almost impossible not to see in him, as he undoubtedly saw in himself, a man of destiny. If his ambition to control the entire electric supply of the world

could have been realized he would have transcended human status and have become a Great Power, and at one time nobody could be quite sure that the megalomaniac dream could *not* be realized. His confidence was limitless. He was ready to undertake the stabilization of the currencies of France and Belgium when both countries were passing through a crisis of devaluation, and actually defined his conditions for two per cent. loans to Paris and Brussels.

No superman could have more conscientiously fulfilled the obligation to lead a super-life. All the year round suites were reserved for him, in London at Claridge's, in Paris at the Ritz; and he maintained a fleet of private aeroplanes to transport himself, his guests, and his secretaries and couriers to his palaces in Brussels and Biarritz. His greatest pride, however, was his estate at Melton Mowbray. If Dr. Johnson was right in believing it to be an illustration of the paucity of human pleasures that hunting should be considered one of them, Alfred Loewenstein proved the futility of wealth. He had sufficient judgment of horses to be given employment during the War buying remounts for Belgian cavalry, but he was a judge, rather than a master, of horses, and thus ran more than the normal risks in riding to hounds. If he was, more than he guessed, an *outré* dweller in the Shires, he was a magnificently hospitable one, and the Prince of Wales was one of his guests at Melton.

Hydro-electric undertakings and artificial silk deals made Loewenstein one of the three richest men in the world, and six months before he died the value of the shares in the International Holdings Company, which he controlled, was thirty-one millions. A fight with a hostile alliance of banks reduced the value of the shares by more than twelve millions, and Loewenstein seems to have lost his usual alertness in the excitement of resistance. He was still struggling to recover lost ground when he was killed.

As his aeroplane was high over the Channel he opened the entrance door and stepped out, and it was suggested that he had intended to open another door, leading to a lavatory—a theory that was officially accepted, though there were many arguments against its probability. There was at least an equal likelihood that Loewenstein committed suicide—a French doctor who examined his body when it was recovered from the sea found “toxic matter” in the organs—and the uncertainty depreciated the value of International Holdings shares by a further six million pounds.

CHAPTER XIII

THE ECONOMIC ASPECT

In a word, to get wealth is a great trouble, anxiety to keep, grief to lose it.

—ROBERT BURTON.

Looking Backwards—Economic Consequences of the Peace—Waste and Inflation—Over-Capitalization—The Geddes Axe—The Return to the Gold Standard—Increasing Unemployment—Rationalization—Repercussions of the Wall Street Slump—The End of Free Trade.

THE post-War decade has been a period when, as never before, public issues have been mainly economic in character; not merely fundamentally and indirectly, as most public issues have always been, but specifically and obviously. The old political contests had been settled by 1914: individual liberty had been gained—and to a large extent lost again during the War; political democracy was in being; economic democracy was still to come. The technique of satisfying the wants of teeming millions through the efforts of other teeming millions was to undergo profound modifications in some countries, and in others revolutionary change; for as the *Times Review of the Year* apocalyptically proclaimed, "Although 1918 saw freedom avenged in principle, it saw also Bolshevism acclimatized as a disease in one country and as a name of dread in others." The very cure for Bolshevism was to be sought in the Fascist Corporative State. Free trade and *laissez-faire* were to be dissolved by a wave of economic nationalism and national planning.

But though in 1918 the problems of reconstruction were

mainly economic, their solution was sought along traditional lines. Men set themselves to re-establish pre-War conditions. In the return to normality the standard of comparison was the early months of 1914. Prices and wages were to return to equilibrium, and equilibrium meant the conditions of the year before the War. As soon as economic restrictions were got rid of, all would be well; the great mass of conservative business opinion joined with the Liberal *Economist* in pronouncing that bureaucratic management of business had been tried and found wanting. Men turned their eyes and their aspirations backward; but it would have been better if they had looked more closely into the future, for the conditions of the Edwardian age were never to come again.

It is small wonder that men failed to turn back the hands of time; the economic life of England was strangely transformed. When the Armistice was signed the dominant note in the workshop of the world and the warehouse of Europe was scarcity. Queues for food had only been abolished by a system of rationing; high prices and profiteering were met by co-operative kitchens and the sale of clothing by Government at fixed prices; consumption of goods and services was checked by such devices as the curfew imposed on restaurants and theatres, which nevertheless did a roaring trade. Production was handicapped by a shortage of raw materials due to the dearth of shipping and the U-boat blockade; and by a shortage of manpower.

A large part of the productive capacity of the country was organized for war and not for peace, and was under the control, more or less direct, of the Government. A considerable proportion of the public expenditure, which had reached unprecedented dimensions, was met by printing currency notes, and business was doing well on the consequent rising price-level.

The attempt to put back the clock, and at the same time create "a land fit for heroes", was doomed to failure; yet the transition of industry to a peace-time basis, which in 1918 seemed the most difficult problem to be solved, was achieved with a creditable smoothness. The demobilization of the armed forces and munition workers was well organized, and such temporary unemployment as fell to the lot of the "de-mobbed" was alleviated by an unemployment donation. On the other hand, there was such haste to be rid of D.O.R.A. and all she stood for, that the transition from a governmentally organized to a *laissez-faire* economy was too rapid and insufficiently considered. Changes were made piecemeal, and sometimes in opposite directions, in response to the clamour of interests or in fulfilment of hasty election pledges.

Politics dominated policy abroad as well as at home, and the foundations of the troubles of a generation were well and truly laid at Versailles and Saint-Germain. The dismemberment of Central Europe brought about an economic nationalism inimical to that freedom of foreign commerce on which Great Britain's pre-War prosperity had depended; the extortion of crippling reparations from Germany forced her to develop her exports at any price and so undercut us in our foreign markets; and the establishment of France in a position to cripple her vanquished neighbours led to the impoverishment of some of England's principal customers.

While at home England was returning to *laissez-faire* in economic life, abroad she helped to make a Europe in which *laissez-faire* could not work and free trade must inevitably be abandoned. Instead of educating our foreign customers to return to their pre-War habits of buying in the workshop of the world, we made ourselves jointly responsible for conditions in which they were impelled to build more and more workshops of their own. When

housewives take in their own washing, the laundry goes on short time.

But while the devastation of post-War Europe was in the making, England was enjoying a period of artificial prosperity. The release of demand from the restrictions of war-time, the change in the direction of demand from the instruments of war to the amenities of peace, the unpreparedness of industry to supply the goods desired, would in any case have resulted in great economic activity and high prices. An additional impetus to demand and the rise in prices was given by lavish government spending. Saddled with the task of clearing up the débris of four years' destruction and disorganization, wisely resolved not to throw demobilized man-power too rapidly upon the labour market, committed to ambitious and costly projects of social legislation, the Government maintained expensive departments, gave subsidies and transmitted purchasing power in the form of enormous donations and pensions. It raised the money to meet this tremendous outlay, not by withdrawing a corresponding amount of purchasing power through taxation, but largely by borrowing in such a way as to cause credit inflation, and by the simpler process of printing Treasury notes.

A steep rise in prices was inevitable, and led to high industrial and trading profits and successful demands for higher wages; and as this led to a still further increase in nominal purchasing power, and so to still higher prices, profits and wages, the war-time inflation was carried onward and upward into the earlier peace years. Those who were subject to high taxation united with the adherents of fiscal orthodoxy in crying out for Governmental economy and a balanced budget, but an attitude of mind acquired during four years of war emergency was not easily changed. "During the War we have worked under conditions of economic recklessness which were partly inevitable and

partly criminal," said the *Economist* on the morrow of the Armistice; the Government was used to spending, and the people to thinking, in millions; prompt deliveries of munitions and supplies had been more important than economical cost.

The conditions of economic recklessness were maintained for two more years. All classes of society tended to feel, moreover, that a holiday from effort and economy was due to them; encouraged by hopes of an earthly paradise for everybody, the workers demanded shorter hours as well as higher wages; while the rich, and perhaps especially the "new rich", spent extravagantly. The "new poor", on the other hand, oppressed by the high taxation on large incomes, were selling their estates and art treasures in order to make ends meet—or to invest the proceeds in industry. The prospect of high profits led to speculative enterprise; new capital was recklessly invited and as recklessly subscribed, and many companies were formed which were never to pay a dividend. Many old-established businesses, notably in the cotton trade, were sold to the public at ridiculously high valuations, while others capitalized their reserves and issued bonus shares. In the bad times which were to come, these companies were to find themselves burdened with fixed interest charges which they could not reasonably have been expected to bear, and this was later to prevent many English manufacturers from reducing their costs and prices to competitive levels; the businesses were therefore crippled until drastic reductions of capital became imperative.

It was possibly this over-capitalization, involving a lower rate of earnings, which led to the break in the upward movement of industrial shares which occurred at the beginning of 1920. Once confidence had been disturbed, business became hesitant; before the middle of

the year wholesale prices began to fall. As retail prices still continued to advance, consumers held off, and stocks began to pile up. The fall in prices, both of shares and of commodities at wholesale, became violent. The year which had opened with feverish activity ended with trade deadlock, short time and what was then considered to be heavy unemployment.

But the Government was able to congratulate itself that the adverse balance of foreign trade had been reduced; that, when credit was taken for the "invisible" items like shipping and financial services and interest received from abroad, the favourable balance was approaching the pre-War figure; that a budget surplus had permitted the reduction of the public debt by 250 million pounds; and that sterling had risen in value on the foreign exchanges. Despite the depression, wages rose more steeply than ever; but the housing of the people made little headway. Parliament was dominated by finance, by civil war in Ireland and by troubles in India; it had no time to make a considered diagnosis of the fundamental economic problems of the future.

By 1921 "all nations were feeling the grievous weight of debt, perhaps in proportion as their fiscal conscience had enjoined a stringent financial policy to meet it"; Great Britain announced, in the famous Balfour Declaration, that she did not propose to collect, in the matter of inter-governmental accounts, more than she herself owed to her creditors. Several by-elections were won upon the issue of economy; and the Geddes Axe fell upon the Ministries and upon social legislation alike. "Ministers" (it was recorded) "had lost faith in their ability to make good the elaborate and costly ideas of reconstruction that had inspired them a little more than two years before." While they had been trying to build a better world at home, they had helped to bring about the ruin of a large

part of Europe. They had forgotten that the wealth of Britain depended upon the prosperity of her neighbours. They had accelerated instead of retarding the working of those forces which, even before the War, were undermining the pre-eminence of their country's staple industries; and in the years to come the leaders of the State, of industry and of labour, were to cling desperately to the declining fortunes of coal and iron, shipbuilding and cotton, and lacked the vision to foresee and plan those readjustments in the country's economy which might have brought, not indeed the old unique advantage, but a more modest state of well-being based upon newer industries and a more sensitive commercial and industrial technique.

By 1921 most of the material ravages of the War had been repaired, and the task of the next decade was to find a way out of the more subtle difficulties created as much by the Peace as by the War. The standard of living of employed workers was, and remained, definitely above the pre-War level.

From 1921 to 1925 the story is one of slow and painful readjustment, and on the whole of gradual progress. Unemployment fell from two million to around a million; national production and exports of manufactured goods increased slowly. If the staple heavy industries of pre-War times were stagnant, new trades, catering principally for the home consumer, were doing well; and while the shadow of decay was hovering over the north, new factories were beginning to spring up in the midlands and the south. Services like road transport, electricity and amusements were expanding rapidly. The moderate prosperity and relatively high wages of the "sheltered" industries aroused envy and criticism in the less fortunate, who felt themselves to be bearing all the burden through the higher cost of the "sheltered" services. There was a temporary and pronounced improvement in the coal, iron and steel trades

as a result of the French occupation of the Ruhr Valley, but this prosperity based on the misfortune of others was not of long duration.

The general sentiment was that the country was making progress. The standard rate of income tax fell from 6s. to 4s. in the pound; the excess profits duty had been abolished; national budgets had shown a surplus; part of the National Debt was refunded at lower rates of interest. The Labour Prime Minister, during his short term of office, revealed himself a first-rate Foreign Secretary; while his Chancellor was a pillar of fiscal orthodoxy. By the Dawes Plan the demands on Germany for reparations were scaled down from the lunatic to the merely fantastic. The foreign exchange value of the pound sterling, which in 1921 had climbed from about \$3·80 to around \$4·50, was in 1924 and 1925 forced by deflationary measures up to pre-War parity (\$4·86), and in April, 1925, after ten years, the £ went back on to a modified form of the gold standard.

Wholesale prices, which since 1922 had been rising gently, now began to fall; retail prices remained comparatively rigid, and wages hardly fell at all. The wages cost remaining high and prices falling, the manufacturer found his profit less easily; while the stabilization of the pound at an unnaturally high level made it easier for foreigners to sell goods in England than for Englishmen to sell abroad their products which, in terms of the depreciated foreign currencies, were too dear. On the other hand, the restoration of the gold standard was a powerful weapon in the City's fight to re-establish London as the financial centre of the world; and since many debts to us were owed in sterling, it increased the real value of those assets, and helped to increase our favourable balance of foreign payments. Manufacturing industry was sacrificed for the benefit of the finance and insurance industries.

The stage was already set, therefore, for industrial depression when in May, 1926, the General Strike and the much more prolonged coal stoppage plunged the greater part of English manufacture into stagnation. The General Strike brought the country nearer to political revolution than it had been for perhaps a century, but economically the prolonged coal stoppage was more important. It played havoc with the export trade, and the balance of foreign payments, including the invisible items, became unfavourable. The number of unemployed rose to 1,645,000. The yield of taxation diminished, and the national accounts failed to balance.

The next three years witnessed the failure of England to secure an important share of the extraordinary prosperity which swept over the United States, where a new industrial revolution, based upon automatic machinery and new methods of management, was taking place. It came to be realized that in her staple industries England's plant and machinery were to a considerable extent out of date, the whole system of production and distribution of products unsuited for post-War conditions, and the financial structure of many companies weak and over-capitalized. The new capital necessary for a radical reconstruction could not be attracted to stagnant industries; trade union conservatism stood in the way of drastic innovations; and many of the manufacturers themselves were lacking in enterprise. A large number of the countries which were formerly our customers had developed heavy industries of their own, more up-to-date and producing at lower cost than those of Great Britain. Political trouble in China and India, and the development of native manufacture, combined to ruin the export trade of the Lancashire cotton industry; while new habits of clothing and the cheapening of artificial silk damaged the home market for both cotton and wool.

But the rest of industry was doing well, and apart from the older textile and the heavy industries, production compared favourably even with 1913. The significance of this change was not understood; it was not realized that as the world became better and better equipped with railways and bridges the demand for steel was unlikely to expand indefinitely; the effect of economic nationalism abroad upon the British staple industries was not accepted as being permanent; and it was not seen that the new industrial revolution had, by making possible the satisfaction of man's needs for the more fundamental products at a much lower cost in time and labour, and thus by adding to leisure, increased the relative importance of the industries which produced for direct consumption. Reviewing the history of 1927 the *Economist* wrote that "good money was put into industries which are unnecessary and even anti-social, as well as speculative". It is indeed true that the newer industries are more speculative than the older basic industries in the days of their prosperity; demand for semi-luxuries is more fickle than demand for necessities. But the problem of production for a relatively unstable demand has to be faced; when, after the world slump of 1929, this was ultimately realized, practical men, familiar with planning in the factory and perhaps also influenced by reports of the Russian experiment, suggested solutions along the lines of economic planning. Conceptions of planning ranged from a tariff to aid the home manufacturer or an addition to the number of public corporations like the B.B.C., to comprehensive plans in which not only production was to be planned, but consumption itself was to be stabilized through manipulation of prices. But it was not until the beginning of the 'thirties that men began to look forward and seek a solution along new lines.

The slump in stock prices in Wall Street in the autumn

of 1929 found England, if not sharing the unprecedented prosperity and optimism of America's "new economic era", at least more prosperous than she had been for several years and confident of the future. Even coal and iron and steel were improving slightly, and great things were expected of "rationalization", even though the formation in 1928 of the Lancashire Textile Corporation did not seem to have decreased the troubles of the cotton industry. Unemployment had shown no diminution during the last two years, and remained at over a million persons, but *employment* had expanded to keep pace with the flow of new adult workers into industry; production had increased more than employment, indicating an increase in efficiency as measured by output per head. There was an unhealthy boom on the London Stock Exchange, especially in the shilling shares of mushroom companies, and the Hatry crash and the difficulties of the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company had already given warning of the unsound finance which had attached itself parasitically to some parts of the productive system. Money was being applied to speculation both in London and across the Atlantic which should have been directed into English industry. A further step in the settlement of the reparations question had been made by the Young Plan, by which German obligations on this account were reduced from the fantastic to the merely impossible.

If it was some time before the full effects of the Wall Street slump reached American industry, it was longer still before the English economic system was seriously undermined. But the two years from October, 1929, witnessed an accelerating depression of wholesale prices, production, employment, and hope for the future. Production exceeded demand throughout the world for many primary commodities, and the universal slump in agricultural prices, accentuated by the failure of attempts at

output restriction and price maintenance, impoverished the agricultural countries and ruined the export trade of the countries which would normally have sold them manufactured goods. Deprived of their foreign markets, many countries tried to support their home industries by prohibitive tariffs, thus causing international trade to dwindle still further. War debts, which could not be paid in goods because the creditor countries set tariff barriers against them, caused a maldistribution of gold which upset the proper working of the gold standard; the gold reserves of the debtor countries were depleted, while the sterilization of huge stocks of gold in the creditor countries resulted in deflation and a steep and prolonged fall in prices. The fall in prices greatly increased the real burden of all fixed interest obligations, so that international debt began to threaten the national finances and exchanges of the debtor countries, while fixed interest charges weighed more and more heavily upon industry.

Exposed to world influences by her position as international banker and financier, England became involved in a series of financial difficulties which began with the inability of the Austrian Kredit-Anstalt to meet its obligations in July, 1931, and soon afterward spread to Germany. The international financial situation became dominated by lack of confidence, and the psychological effect of President Hoover's proposal for a year's moratorium on war debts and reparations was spoiled by the delay and grudging spirit with which France accepted it.

English bankers had borrowed abroad at short term in order to make long-dated loans in Germany. Fear and dislike abroad of the Government's policy of borrowing to pay unemployment relief was accentuated by ill-considered propaganda against this Government policy at home, with the result that grave suspicions were entertained on the Continent that the English Budget could not be balanced

and that the country would be pushed to an inflation of the currency. Foreign short-term creditors therefore began to withdraw their loans, and since England could not realize her German assets, there was a severe weakness of the exchanges and a sharp drain on her gold reserves. In the third week in August a National Government composed of members of the principal political parties was formed to balance the budget and save the pound; and on September 21 the gold standard was suspended and the pound fell immediately to about 80 per cent. of its par value. Foreign fear of inflation appeared however to be ill-founded; Mr. Snowden's supplementary budget was balanced by drastic economies, by wages and salary cuts, by reduction of unemployment insurance benefits and increases in the contributions, and by raising the standard rate of income tax to 5s. in the pound and by other tax increases. No inflation either by printing notes or by Government borrowing was necessary, and the pound has remained fairly stable between 70 per cent. and 80 per cent. of parity, and restrictions imposed on the purchase of foreign currencies were soon removed.

The Government which was formed to save the pound and was soon to have to suspend the gold standard, made a virtue of necessity, and hopes were encouraged that the currency depreciation would act as a stimulus to the export trade. Such hopes, combined with a fear among English investors, once the pound went off parity, that its value might in fact sink very low, led to a temporary boom in equity shares. But such slight stimulus to the export trades as did exist was offset by a deepening of the depression abroad. Before the end of the year there was evidence of a determination on the part of the English to consolidate their position along the lines of a national, or perhaps an imperial, instead of an international economy, and a newly elected National Government supported by a large Con-

servative majority in the House introduced a comprehensive tariff system. Thus was reversed a free trade policy which had been triumphant for at least seventy years. There is already evidence that the tariff is acting as a stimulus to production for home consumption at the expense of the export trades, and it will probably accelerate that shift of importance from the older staple "heavy" and textile industries to the industries producing semi-luxury goods and services for direct consumption, which has been noted as a world change earlier in this chapter.

It remains to be seen whether a country with a large industrial population, compelled to buy large quantities of food and raw materials abroad, can maintain a reasonable standard of living in a world in which international trade is more and more restricted by governmental interference and political uncertainty. If the tendency for manufactured goods to be dear in relation to primary products becomes stronger than ever in the future, it may be possible for England to buy what she needs from abroad with the restricted volume of export trade she is still able to do.

The strange phenomenon of universal want amid universal plenty, of unsatisfied needs existing side by side with unemployed productive power in the form of plant and labour which ought to be able to satisfy those needs, has led to widespread doubt as to the efficacy of a *laissez-faire*, individualist economy to solve the problems of a highly capitalistic age. Some urge that what is needed is a *greater* degree of individualism, that all would be well if reparations, war debts, and "artificial" restrictions of all kinds on international and internal economic activity were abolished. Others see all the present difficulties as arising out of a mistaken monetary policy, and advocates of a regulated inflation are to be found in more and more respectable quarters. Others again can envisage no solution but in centralized planning of production on a

national, Imperial or international scale. Perhaps the majority of business men expect "the natural course of the trade cycle" to swing the world out of depression into prosperity. Meanwhile the peoples of the world, and especially those of England, wait, with a remarkable patience and a periodical fling at fortune in the Irish Hospitals Sweepstake, for something to turn up.

CHAPTER XIV

ENGLAND'S CRISIS

"And thus the whirligig of Time brings in his revenges."

—SHAKESPEARE.

Towards the Crisis—"A Long, Slow Crumbling"—The Wreck of the R101—The Beauvais Tragedy—Forty-eight Coffins—The May Report—Trade Union Intervention—The King Returns—National Coalition—Ten Per Cent off the Dole—Invergordon and the Slump in the Pound—Time's Whirligig.

THE "historic present" is the most obtrusive and the most irritating trick in the overstocked box of tricks of those who, straggling after Strachey, seek to impose on the past the vivid unreality of a newspaper "splash". Their task is to confuse the "Then" with the "Now", to make Cleopatra as topical as Mrs. Barney. That is the reverse of the problem set by this record, which, in order to achieve the remoteness appropriate to "history", has had to make-believe that tendencies now continuing—in some cases, now only approaching their height—were as spent as feudalism and that persons still active were as safely dead as King Pandion. The past tense has, perhaps too often, been dragooned into substitution for the present. With this chapter our necessary harmless artifice reaches the limit of its elasticity; it can hardly be stretched far enough to reach "finis". What arch pretence could confer upon Mr. Snowden's outburst at the Hague—the "grotesque and ridiculous" rejection of loyal allies' reparations claims—a historic detachment, when Lausanne has but a day or two ago continued the reparations compromise?

Mr. MacDonald's evangelistic visit to Washington in 1929 is only a stage in a weary journey of which the Geneva Disarmament Conference in 1932 is, too, only a stage. There are other considerations that may seem to deny any reality to such a limiting phrase as the "Post-War Period"; it may seem merely a verbal convention, an arbitrary attempt to make a neat parcel of time. For example, at the beginning of that Period there was war, very thinly disguised, with the Southern Irish; and now, though the guns are silent, it is still a thin disguise for war to speak in terms of tariffs and emergency duties. For another example, in 1919 India was entering upon the first great Non-Co-operation campaign, and in 1932 there are thirty thousand Non-Co-operators in Indian prisons.¹ But to multiply such examples—as it would be easy to do—would be merely to insist, not very helpfully, that a dozen years is far too short for the final solution of desperately intricate problems.

The only ambition that a gossiping, necessarily fragmentary, chronicle can afford is that of a kind of visual entertainment. There are ages, says Spengler, when the tempo of history is so accelerated that "every decade has significance, every year, almost, its special 'look' ". If we cannot feel detached from the major problems of the post-War decade, at least we are sure that a special change has come over our looks.

The previous chapter has gone as far as it is appropriate for informality to go in discussing the economic causes of the Crisis, and has acknowledged that its beginnings antedate by years any popular recognition of its imminence. Now, in after-the-event wisdom, the wonder is that recognition was deferred for so long. When the American

¹ This number—the maximum in 1932—was reduced by July to 24,000, according to the Viceroy's (Lord Willingdon) statement in the Legislative Assembly on September 5, 1932.

stock market “went over the edge of Niagara”—in Mr. F. L. Allen’s vivid phrase—when Hatry came tumbling down, and when the unemployment figures went climbing up, there was, inevitably, grumbling over the “slump”. But there had been other slumps since the War. Sir Oswald Mosley, for instance, was not suspected then—nor has he since incurred the suspicion—of distaste for emphasis; yet in the most critical debate of his Parliamentary career, when all the circumstances impelled him to stress the gravity of the economic situation, he declared, “What I fear more than a sudden crisis is a long, slow crumbling.” That was in May, 1930, when Sir Oswald had resigned from the Labour Government because his memorandum on the cure for unemployment had been rejected; if it had been accepted it would have added to existing expenditure on unemployment relief an annual sum of £10,000,000 to provide work for three hundred thousand men, and an indefinite amount to provide retirement pensions for workers aged sixty; so that it would almost certainly have ensured that disintegration would be neither long nor slow.

There were, for those who were not unemployed politicians nor unemployed dole-drawers, many other things to think about during the last year or so of the post-War Period—Bradman’s Test Match scores provided figures more entertaining than any furnished by the Ministry of Labour, and the fate of the Ashes was more popularly discussed than the future of industry; the first Irish Sweep on the November Handicap in 1930 opened new vistas of escape into regions where “slump” and “unemployment” lost their oppressiveness; when the new “talkies” were no longer quite so new they gained a fresh topicality in the uproar over Sunday cinemas, stirred up by the £25,000 claim of that enterprising common informer, Miss Millie Orpen, against a cinema theatre, under the

Lord's Day Observance Act of 1781; and crime, with its Epsom Downs and Blackheath horrors and its ominously "blazing" car, added its distractions. And there were, of course, claims upon attention that were neither morbid nor frivolous—pre-eminently the claim made by the greatest of post-War disasters, the wreck of the R101.

At thirty-six minutes past six on a melancholy autumn evening—October 4—the "largest airship in the world" swung her nose away from the mooring-mast at Cardington, and headed south, south for France, for the Mediterranean, for Ismailia, for India. There had been a little delay in the start, one of the reversing engines had been stubborn, but it was merely enough to sharpen the edge of pioneering impatience. The Air Secretary's valediction was, "I have told the Prime Minister I shall be back in England on October 20"—he had to report to the Imperial Conference on the new possibilities of Empire communication opened up by the airship's Indian flight. With Lord Thomson aboard the R101 were her designer, Colonel Richmond, the Director of Airship Development, Wing-Commander Colmore, the Director of Civil Aviation, Sir Sefton Brancker. There were fifty others, embodying virtually all that had been learned in England since the War of the construction and navigation of airships.

The deep hum of R101's engines was heard over the Home Counties; suburban householders, craning from their attic windows, swore afterwards that the airship had grazed their chimney-pots. Actually she was flying at some fifteen hundred feet, her great hull shining under rain squalls and her speed retarded a little, but not seriously, by head winds. Over the Channel she lost height—dropping to nine hundred feet, and the navigating officer took the wheel and pulled the ship up to a thousand feet: "Don't let her go below a thousand," he told the Height-Coxswain. That was about midnight. A few minutes

later the airship sent out a good night message on her wireless:—

“After an excellent supper our distinguished passengers smoked a final cigar, and, having sighted the French coast, have now gone to bed to rest after the excitement of their leave-taking. All essential services are functioning satisfactorily. The crew have settled down to watch-keeping routine.”

Two hours later the largest airship in the world was a mass of twisted metal on a hillside near Beauvais. Every one of the distinguished passengers had been trapped in the fiery envelope and burned to death, and of the complement of fifty-four only eight men scrambled clear of the blazing ship: two of these were mortally injured, and six bandaged men were all that remained to march behind the forty-eight coffins carried to Cardington Cemetery a week after the *R101* set out.

What brought the airship down? A commission of inquiry sat for many days, heard many witnesses; the National Physical Laboratory conducted many experiments; and at the end no more satisfactory answer was reached than that the *R101* was wrecked by “substantial loss of gas”. The report admitted, “How the vessel began to lose gas can never be definitely ascertained.” What was definitely ascertained was that the airship, which had been flying steadily since she passed over the Channel, suddenly went into a steep dive; it took the coxswain thirty seconds or so to straighten her out, but hardly had he done so when she dived again. Her nose “crunched”—the survivors agreed on that description of the impact—on the hillside and immediately she burst into flames. It was assumed that the electric wiring was broken and short-circuited by the shock of her fall, and that this set the gas in her envelope alight. So fiercely did the fabric burn that the wonder was

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not that forty-six were lost immediately, but that all were not lost. One man, an engineer named Bell, was saved by the accident that he was standing under one of the ship's water-tanks; it burst above his head, drenching him and extinguishing the flames near him. The actual impact of her fall was so slight that a wireless operator, Disley, who was thrown out on to the grass, was unhurt; he crawled hither and thither under the blazing envelope—"a burning blanket" was his description of it—seeking a hole in the fabric, and, when at length he found one, his chief injuries were caused by grasping a white-hot girder to drag himself through to safety.

One man only saw the R101's last dive, a peasant named Rabouille, who was poaching in the woods a quarter of a mile away. Many weeks later he was a bewildered and not very helpful witness at the inquiry in London.

While the last sparks of the fire were smouldering into extinction the Sunday newspapers were announcing the R101's auspicious departure.

Only the last London editions carried news of the disaster, but late into the day special editions were rushed out, giving the full story of the airship's end.

The immediate emotional repercussion was stronger than that of any disaster since the War. Single events had produced higher death-rolls—more lives had been lost in the sinking of the liner *Vestris* only a few months earlier; but, excluding the necessarily bloody accidents of war-time, no single event since the foundering of the *Titanic* had the same force of contrast between the high expectations of setting out and their sudden and complete obliteration. Two years had been spent in investigation and calculation before the first bolt of the airship's framework was riveted; two more years had gone to her construction; she had been given trial voyages to assure her for the great enterprise of



THE R101, BEAUVAIS, OCTOBER 5, 1930

the Indian journey, the end for which she was made, the achievement that was to justify many men's labour and the expenditure of £500,000. Again and again the departure for India had been postponed, in order that there should be no doubt of success—and when the final test came the R101 plunged to destruction when she had flown only 216 miles of her five-thousand-mile journey. Years of planning—and then in seven hours all that was left was a charred skeleton on a French hill.

The finality and completeness of defeat was exhibited in London and in the Bedfordshire village where R101 was built, exactly a week after she set forth. The forty-eight coffins brought back from Beauvais made a two-mile cortège from Westminster Abbey through the streets of Central London, a cortège that took an hour to file past six Prime Ministers—Mr. MacDonald and the heads of the Dominion Governments—as they waited to take their places in the procession as mourners. Behind the gun-carriages marched the “third watch” of R 101, the reservists of her crew who had stayed unwillingly behind when their ship sailed for India. Another mourner was Dr. Eckener, the commander of the Graf Zeppelin. That afternoon the forty-eight dead were buried in one grave at Cardington, within sight of R 101's hangar.

There were suggestions, carefully considered by Sir John Simon in his official inquiry, that Lord Thomson's eagerness to achieve the flight to India, the chief goal of his service as Air Minister, had sent the airship forth before her constructors and navigators were ready; but the evidence brought no confirmation of the story.

The emotions stirred by the loss of R101 swelled up with hardly diminished intensity at the news of the sinking of the submarine *Poseidon* in Chinese waters, a tragedy redeemed by the heroism of Petty Officer Patrick Willis. Tragic or trivial, there was excitement enough in the news

of late 1930 and early 1931 to mask the approach of the Crisis.

For the ordinary newspaper reader the first unmistakable warning of a desperate situation was given by the publication in July of Sir George May's committee of inquiry into national expenditure. The report insisted that the only alternative to irreparable insolvency was the immediate saving of £96,500,000, and specified "readjustments necessary to re-establish fair relativities over the field of Government and local authority servants and with wage-earners generally". Notably, the "readjustments" involved reductions in pay for teachers, police, the fighting services, and, above all, a drastic decrease in the dole. If the urgency of these recommendations was at first insufficiently obvious—which is hardly conceivable—it was placed beyond overlooking by the Government's response. The Prime Minister appointed four Ministers to serve with him on a special Economy Committee, and the Committee underlined the emergency by working through the Summer Recess. By August 19 Downing Street was able to announce that the Cabinet had "reached agreement on a set of figures which would balance the Budget". Simultaneously it became known that there was very serious divergence on details of economy method; a majority of Ministers, led by Mr. J. H. Thomas, favoured the imposition of a 10 per cent. revenue tariff as an alternative to drastic reduction of unemployment benefit, but to this the Chancellor of the Exchequer was grimly opposed. The next stage was a conference of Ministers with the Council of the Trade Union Congress, in which the conflict was aggravated—the Council insisting on the tariff, and Mr. Snowden remaining unshaken in his hostility. Mr. Snowden won. After another day of discussion the Economy Committee refused to yield to the majority of its colleagues and to the union leaders.

Next morning, a Sunday, the public learned that the King had returned overnight from Balmoral, and that Mr. Baldwin was hurrying back to London from Aix-les-Bains. There was no need by now for the headlines to shout of a Crisis. Mr. Everyman had been startled into awareness, and he expressed his anxious interest as he had not expressed it since the War. A Cabinet meeting was fixed for seven in the evening, but long before that hour Downing Street was packed with an excited crowd overflowing into Whitehall; extra police had to be summoned, and later Downing Street was cleared and a line of police barred the approach from Whitehall; so great was the confusion that when one of His Majesty's Ministers, Miss Margaret Bondfield, approached on foot, she was not recognized by the policemen, who thrust her back into the crowd. "I am in the Cabinet," she protested, and was told, "We have heard that tale before." Alas, for Miss Bondfield, it was not to be heard from her much longer. Before the Cabinet meeting the Prime Minister had twice been in conference with the King, who had also received Sir Herbert Samuel and Mr. Baldwin. The King, it was reported, was using all his powers of persuasion to bring the leaders of the three Parties together upon a national policy.

The issue was decided on that Sunday night, although it was not until midday on the following day, August 24, that the decision was made public. Mr. MacDonald's Cabinet, except for three members, would not follow him in an attack upon the dole, and the Labour Government came to an end. Before the afternoon was out Mr. MacDonald had resigned and had been reappointed Prime Minister of a Cabinet which brought together Mr. Baldwin and Mr. Snowden, Sir Herbert Samuel and Lord Sankey, Mr. Neville Chamberlain and Mr. Thomas, Sir Samuel Hoare, Sir Philip Cunliffe-Lister and Lord Reading. "It is not a Coalition Government," said Mr. MacDonald,

broadcasting next evening. "I would not take part in that. It is a Government of individuals."

Only individuals, it seemed, could save the threatened pound.

"As the commerce and well-being not only of the British nation but of a large part of the civilized world has been built up and rests upon well-founded confidence in sterling, the new Government will take whatever steps may be deemed by them necessary to justify the maintenance of that confidence unimpaired . . . If there were any collapse in the pound we should be defaulted on our obligations to the rest of the world. Our credit would be gone."

These were the pronouncements of August 24 and 25. On September 21 industrial and commercial magnates were congratulating the National Government on the suspension of the gold standard, which had for so long imposed an artificial handicap on British trade overseas.

Before September 21 was reached, however, there had been a series of shocks for a public somewhat dazed, and considerably depressed by the solemnity of repeated warnings of sacrifices in store. There was another reminder of the peril to the pound when Mr. MacDonald told Parliament on September 8 that had it not been for the measures taken by the National Government sterling would have fallen to ten shillings in a night. (To enhance the prevailing gloom, on the same day, Cameronian, an overwhelming favourite for the St. Leger, finished last in the race.) And on September 11 "sacrifice" was harshly defined by Mr. Snowden in an Emergency Budget that added sixpence to income-tax, 10 per cent. to surtax, a penny a pint to the price of beer, and reduced the pay of teachers by 15 per cent., the pay of the police, the Army, Navy and Air Force by varying drastic percentages,

and brought down the dole from 17s. to 15s. 3d. a week.

After that it seemed that there could be no more shocks—and then there fell the blow of Invergordon. On Tuesday, September 15, the Atlantic Fleet was due to put to sea for Fleet exercises. Two days earlier notices were posted aboard all the ships of the reductions in pay that had been foreshadowed in Mr. Snowden's Emergency Budget speech. That afternoon the port watches—about five thousand men—came ashore, and there was a meeting in the shore canteen to discuss the "cuts". During the meeting an officer of the patrol entered and warned the men that he could permit nothing that would conflict with discipline and that he would stay to hear what was said. He was (according to a bluejacket's account) "quietly picked up and dropped outside, without violence". The canteen was not large enough to hold all the malcontents, so the meeting was removed to a football ground, and there the men decided that, if the starboard watches stood by them, they would not take the ships to sea. A proposal to stay ashore was rejected, because many of the men had no money and depended on the ships for food.

Meanwhile, three ships, *Warspite*, *Repulse* and *Malaya*, had put to sea. If the notification of the pay reductions had been delayed until the Tuesday, when the entire Fleet was due to sail, there could have been no concerted action by the twelve thousand men of the crews.

On the Monday the starboard watches came ashore. They met on the football ground and confirmed all the decisions of the previous day. Then they went back to their ships. The citizens of Invergordon listened, bewildered and dismayed, to the cheering, "like a broadside", with which their shipmates greeted them.

Next morning the test came. The Commander-in-Chief gave the signal for *Valiant* to lead the line out to sea. Every

man and every officer in the Fleet had his eyes on the ship. When *Valiant's* men remained below deck and refused to obey orders, her officers held a consultation on the quarter-deck, and decided to raise the anchor themselves. They made the attempt, but the men's pickets warned them that as soon as one anchor was raised the men would drop the other. In any case, the raising of the anchors would have been useless, for the stokers were checking the furnaces. When it was clear that the lower deck had won the day the men came crowding from below, and their cheers were taken up from ship to ship along the line. The Atlantic Fleet was paralysed.

It was a model mutiny. (The men insisted that it was merely a strike.) The singing of "The Red Flag" by a few bluejackets seems to have been regarded generally as a deplorable lapse of taste, and a ritual of saluting the White Ensign was instituted. The song of the strike was, "The More We Are Together The Merrier We'll Be"—there was a great deal of singing, with pianos brought up on deck. The men made themselves responsible for the well-being of the ships, and fatigue parties volunteered to keep the ships clean and to work in the kitchens; so long as the officers did not attempt to give orders they were treated with punctilious respect. *Malaya*, *Warspite* and *Repulse* were recalled, and when they had anchored the crews picketed the windlasses. The strike was complete. All shore leave was stopped by the men's own orders, and only the mail and water boats were allowed to leave the ships; when officers came aboard they had themselves to make the boats fast. Between sing-songs the strikers held meetings on deck, with gun-turrets as the speakers' platforms, and the resolutions passed were semaphored from ship to ship; then there was more cheering. A *Daily Herald* correspondent who listened to the speeches from a position close to the ships was struck by the moderation

and absolute order of the meetings; “there is nothing in what they say to which the officers and the masters-at-arms who patrol the outskirts of the meetings can take exception,” he wrote. “Passive resistance is the whole tone of the discussions.”

Invergordon, in fact, shattered all lyrical traditions of nautical irresponsibility. The *Daily Herald* reporter, Mr. P. R. Calder, was told by a strike-leader, “We are fighting for our wives and children. The cuts cannot hit us on board ship. We have cut out the luxuries long ago. Our wives, after the rent is paid, have no more than a pound. How can they stand a cut of 7s. 6d.?” Obviously, none of these sailors answered to the name of Bill.

The arithmetical details of the men’s grievances were discussed in an Admiralty memorandum, which protested that the reductions in pay were not “out of proportion to the sacrifices to which other classes of State servants or of the community in general have been or are to be subject”. By comparative tables of “substantive pay” and “other emoluments”, before and after the reductions, it was shown, for example, that the decrease in the case of an able seaman with more than six years’ service was represented, if he was married, by 10·5 per cent., and, if he was unmarried, by 13·6 per cent. Even so, the seamen argued that the percentages of reduction were higher than in the case of dole-drawers; and, taking substantive pay alone, the percentage of reduction was twenty. At that reckoning it was twice as expensive to be in the King’s service afloat as to be unemployed. The actual terms of the men’s representation to the Admiralty were:

“We, the loyal subjects of His Majesty the King, do hereby present to our Lords the Commissioners of the Admiralty our representation and implore them to amend the drastic cuts in pay which have been inflicted

on the lowest-paid men of the lower deck. It is evident to all concerned that these cuts are a fore-runner of tragedy, misery and immorality among the families of the lower deck, and unless a guaranteed written agreement is received from the Admiralty, confirmed by Parliament, stating that our pay will be revised, we are still to remain as one unit, refusing to serve under the new rates of pay. The men are quite agreeable to accept a cut which they consider within reason."

This judicious combination of iron hand and velvet glove was almost immediately effective. Such delay as there was in settlement was due to the weather; for Rear-Admiral Colvin, Chief of Staff of the Fleet, was held up by fog while flying to London to place the facts before the Cabinet. But nobody in authority wished to prolong a dispute that might so easily be misunderstood on the Bourse and in Wall Street, and the figures of gold withdrawals from London during that week go far to explain the Cabinet's magnanimity. On September 16, when the first news of the strike appeared in newspapers abroad, gold to the value of five million pounds was withdrawn from London; on the following day the figure was doubled, on the 18th it had risen to eighteen millions, and on the 19th it was ten millions.

At home the effect on confidence was less marked, for the good reason that the majority of newspapers took care to say as little about Invergordon as possible. The first report in *The Times*, for example, conveyed the impression the crew of one warship, *Rodney*, was misbehaving—rather than that the Atlantic Fleet was on strike "as one unit"—and that trouble was largely due to the fractiousness of "Irish ratings from Glasgow". And, while twelve thousand men were refusing to obey orders, a popular picture-paper rebuked Labour M.P.'s who had asked

questions in the Commons suggesting that all was not well with the Navy.

The Fleet had been immobilized for fewer than thirty-six hours when the men received the "guaranteed written agreement" they had demanded. The Admiralty directed the ships to proceed to their home ports, promising that immediate investigations would be made of "those classes of cases in which it is alleged that the reductions press exceptionally on those concerned". At first the men were sadly suspicious of the honesty of their Lords the Commissioners; they demanded assurances that the ships really would go to their home ports, and that they would not, when once at sea, be ordered to other, distant, destinations. Even when their fear of this trap was allayed some of the crews needed much persuasion to agree to man the ships. The first ship to strike, *Valiant*, was one of the last to come to terms; there were hours of debate before the last of the strikers went back to duty, and it was not until nearly midnight that the Fleet steamed down the Firth. The Admiralty kept its word, and the ships were all back in their home ports by the end of the week. On the first day of the following week, Sunday, September 20, the Government announced the suspension of the gold standard, and by the end of that week the value of the pound in Paris had fallen to 14*s.* 6*d.*

This informal record opened with a naval catastrophe at Scapa Flow and draws to a close with a naval catastrophe in the Cromarty Firth. It began with a stampeded election that produced a dangerously unwieldy Coalition Government, and the terminus of the post-War Period may justifiably be marked by the stampeded election that established Mr. MacDonald as a Coalition Prime Minister leading the greatest Parliamentary majority since the passing of the Reform Bill.

"And the moral of that is——"? Well, is it not a com-

pound, part the objective record and part the eye that views it? The last sentences cannot be written, they must arise differently in the mind of each reader.

A page or two ago most of the scaffolding of this book was knocked away, deliberately; it only remains to withdraw the last prop. The introduction gave warning that the record would be concerned mainly with extremes—not because of the authors' preference, but from the necessities of the case; and it was suggested that the quality of the great mass of lives is not expressed in a record of the sensational. Now, perhaps, the suggestion may be modified. Emerson's saying, already quoted, that history is the lengthened shadow of a man is possibly a transcendentalist fiction, but there is a sense in which informal history is the lengthened shadow of Mr. Everyman. There can be no "sensation" without a public responsive to that particular kind of excitement, and printer's ink on the news-sheet is the shadow of those who read, as well as of those who write and of those written about. To that extent we are all involved in the monstrous, heroic or absurd events sketched in these pages. And it may be conceived that, as the anatomist takes some tiny knuckle-bone or vertebra, and reconstructs the whole monster, or *vice versa*, deduces each tiny part from the whole, so the whole age is to be deduced from Everyman, and Everyman from the age. Where the poor Hottentot or the unradioed Greek might be tempted to envy or to sneer at any thing in the foregoing chapters, let us everyone accept the smart or assume the laurels as our personal meed. And the moral of that is . . .

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